

# COACH **AND** BUS

The PSV Industry's News Weekly

## WEEK

ISSUE 38

NOVEMBER 7 1992

# 1,800 MOT'S



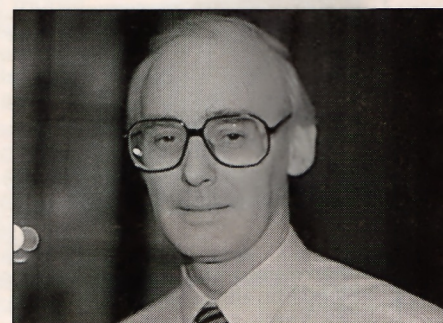
### **MOST EXPENSIVE 44 SEATER AT SHOW**

£370,000 Setra wins coach of the year at Maastricht RAI

.....Page 12

### **FREEMAN TO ACT ON DEREG PROBLEM**

Consultation promised on fine-tuning registration procedure.....Page 16



### **BCC PRESIDENT SETS OUT HIS STALL**

Bill Cottham intends to give 'Buses mean Business' new thrust .....Pages 23 & 24

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## **WMT ORDERED TO RE-TEST ENTIRE FLEET**



# Carlton P.S.V.

## DAF

**1989 MB230 CAETANO ALGARVE** (3.55m), 11.6 litre, ZF gearbox, 53 recliners, courier seat, curtains, carpets, drinks machine, radio/cassette/PA, power door, cont. door, tinted windows, side & rear lockers, MoT Aug '93. Stock No. 2001.

**1988 MB230 CAETANO ALGARVE** (3.35m), 11.6 litre, ZF gearbox, 49 recliners, courier seat, curtains, carpets, drinks machine, radio/cassette/PA, TV/video, power door, cont. door, tinted windows, side & rear lockers, toilet, MoT May '93. Stock No. 2100.

**1983 SB BERKHOF ESPRIT**, 8.6 litre, ZF 6 sp gearbox, 53 recliners, footrests, courier seat, radio/PA/cassette, power door, driver's bunk, MoT Apr '93. Stock No. 2103.

## VOLVO

**1974 B58 PLAXTON ELITE III** with MK IV front, 51 seats, radio, side lockers, MoT March 1993. Stock No. 2094.

**1983 B10M DUPE LASER**, 12 metre, 57 seater, PA/radio/cassette, 6 speed ZF manual gearbox, MoT 19.07.93. Stock No. 1074.

## LEYLAND

**1982 LEOPARD DUPE DOMINANT**, 51 reclining seats, double glazing, curtains, 6 speed gearbox, side lockers, MoT March '93. Stock No. 9033.

## TOYOTA

**1989 CAETANO OPTIMO**, 18 seater, armrests, curtains, carpet, hot drinks facility, power door, boot, MoT July '93. Stock No. 2098.

## NEOPLAN

**1987 (D) JETLINER**, 11 litre, Scania engine and manual gearbox. This vehicle has just been extensively refurbished inside and out in our workshops. Now fitted with the new style Neoplan front, 49 newly remounted reclining seats, courier seat, rear floor mounted toilet, and rear full height continental door. To be sold with cherished number plates, finished in attractive light bronze with colour co-ordinated stripes - recently MoT'd. Stock number 2087 ..... **£49,500**

**1985 JETLINER DAF** 11 litre, manual gearbox. This vehicle is to be refinished to customer specification. New MoT completion. Stock No. 2099 **POA**

**1983-89 SKYLINERS MERCEDES V10** ZF manual gearboxes, 71-77 seats, toilet, water boilers, 2 tables, various specifications ..... **from £40,000**

**1988 SKYLINER MERCEDES V10** auto gearbox. Ref P1 ..... **£79,500**

**1987 SKYLINER GARDNER 6LYT** auto gearbox, choice of 2. Ref P2/3 ..... **£65,000**

These 3 vehicles are fitted with 75 recliners, courier seat, toilet, water boiler, 2 tables, etc, all with new and long MoT's.

## MINIBUS

**1989 TALBOT PEUGEOT TRIAXLE PULLMAN EXPRESS**, 2.5 Diesel, 22 seats, plus 7 standees, Pullman body, Dip-Tac specification, power door, destination box and gear, MoT September '93. Stock No. 2089.

ALL ROADS  
LEAD TO



AT JUNCTION 1, M18  
ROTHERHAM  
South Yorkshire

## THE BUS & COACH MART

**1989 NEOPLAN SKYLINER**, double deck, Mercedes V10 engine, ZF 6 Spd gearbox, Telma, 77 reclining seats + courier, twin water boilers, sink, fridge, wc, wash room, wired for TV/video, long MoT. Ref V1 ..... **Offers**

**1973 LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME**, semi auto gearbox, 49 seats, MoT Sept '92. Stock MO49 ..... **Offers**

**1989 ENSIGN CHARISMA MERCEDES**, 6spd manual gearbox, air conditioning, 49 recliners, curtains, carpets, courier seat, radio/cassette/PA, centre u/floor toilet, drinks facility, cont. door, drivers bunk, MoT April '93. Stock MO48 ..... **£54,000**

**1983 NEOPLAN CITYLINER**, Mercedes V8 engine, 53 recliners, o/s centre sunken toilet, o/s cont door, drinks machine, Webasto, TV/video, courier seat, long MoT. Ref A1 ..... **£33,500**

**1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON 3500**, ZF 6 sp gearbox, 49 + toilet/53 recliners, power door, continental door, radio/PA, seatback nets, aircraft type lockers, long MoT. Ref P4 ..... **£71,500**

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### AVAILABLE NOW

### NEW TOYOTA CAETANO OPTIMO II

21 Seaters  
Choice of Interior  
Colours

**VOLVO 1984 B10M VAN HOOL**  
**ASTRAL 12M**, 58 recliners, brown/orange moquette, n/s sunken toilet, window blinds with curtains, driver's berth, Webasto, courier seat, wired TV/video, servery, drinks machine, white/grey/blue.  
**M.O.T. NOV. 1992**

**BOVA 1989 FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL**  
**12M**, 51 seats (46 recliners + 5 way fixed at rear). Centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed side windows, curtains, courier seat, cream/orange.  
**M.O.T. 1993**

**BOVA 1989 FUTURA FHD 12.290**  
**INTEGRAL 12M**, 49 str., centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazing, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, no rear window, cream/green/gold.  
**M.O.T. 1993**

**DAF 1987 DKVL PLAXTON**  
**PARAMOUNT 3500 12M**, 51 recliners, red/grey moquette, rear sunken toilet, continental entrance/exit door, tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, drinks machine, power entrance door, wired for TV/video, TELMA, ABS anti-lock braking, cream/duo blue.  
**M.O.T. MAY 1993**

**LEYLAND 1989 TIGER (260 BHP)**  
**DUPE 320 12M**, 53 recliners, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, cream/orange/yellow.  
**M.O.T. 1993**

**VOLVO 1988 B10M VAN HOOL**  
**ALIZEE-H 12M**, 49 recliners, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, Webasto heating, drinks machine, coolbox, courier seat, cream/orange/yellow.  
**M.O.T. 1993**

**DAF 1986 DKFL PLAXTON**  
**PARAMOUNT 3500 12M**, 49/53 recliners, grey/red moquette, demountable rear sunken toilet, continental exit door, courier seat, curtains, power entrance door, wired for TV/video, cream/duo blue.  
**M.O.T. FEB 1993**

**BOVA 1989 FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL**  
**12M**, 51 seats grey/red moquette (46 recliners + 5 way fixed at rear). Centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed side windows, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, coolbox, wired TV/video, cream/orange.  
**M.O.T. MARCH 1993**

**VOLVO 1984 B10M VAN HOOL**  
**ALIZEE-SH 12M**, 50 recliners brown moquette, courier seat, rear continental door, Webasto heating, fridge, orange/cream.  
**M.O.T. APRIL 1993**

**VOLVO 1987 B10M VAN HOOL**  
**ALIZEE-H 12M**, 53 recliners, brown moquette, double glazing, TELMA, power door. All white.  
**M.O.T. MARCH 1993**

**VOLVO 1986 VAN HOOL ACRON**  
**T815 INTEGRAL 12M**, DAF powered, 49 recliners, brown moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, berth, double glazed windows, blinds, drinks machine, fridge, courier seat, wired TV/video, cream/green.  
**M.O.T. JUNE 1993**

**VOLVO 1988 B10M GL**  
**JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P599 12M**, 53 recliners, grey/red moquette, courier seat, double glazed side windows, white/primrose/blue.  
**M.O.T. JAN 1993**

**VOLVO 1982 VAN HOOL T815**  
**ACRON 12M**, MAN powered, 49 seats, red moquette, centre sunken toilet with continental door, berth, fridge, water boiler, double glazed side windows, white/duo brown.  
**M.O.T. MARCH 1993**

**LEYLAND 1989 (August) TIGER**  
**(260 BHP) DUPE 320 12M**, 53 recliners, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, cream/orange/yellow.  
**M.O.T. 1993**

**DAF 1984 DKFL DUPE CARIBBEAN**  
**12M**, 53 seats, grey/blue/black moquette, toilet with rear continental door, courier seat, double glazed side windows, power entrance door, TELMA retarder, cream/duo blue.  
**M.O.T. DEC 1992**

**TRADE DESCRIPTIONS ACT;**  
In detailing these used saloon coaches we have quoted the year of registration and not necessarily the model or year of manufacture.

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# COACH AND BUS

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Consider the following. In the first half of this year, sales of new coaches and buses were down 5.5 per cent in Holland. In France, one of the most stable markets in Europe, they were down by six per cent. In Spain sales dropped nearly nine per cent and in Italy 10 per cent. Unfortunately, that's the good news.

The bad news is that registrations in Switzerland are down 43 per cent, in Sweden 41 per cent and in Finland by 40 per cent. All these figures are compared with 1991, which itself was down overall by nearly four per cent.

The major factor that has stopped both 1991 and the first half of 1992 being more serious than they were for European makers was the reunification of Germany and

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## **UK manufacturers still surviving may be forgiven for taking a certain amount of satisfaction for seeing what they have known as reality beginning to affect their feather-bedded European counterparts**

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the consequent surge in demand. Since the collapse of the Iron Curtain, Neoplan, for example, has sold 700 vehicles into what was East Germany. And it is to what used to be the Eastern Bloc that mainland European makers are now turning in an effort to keep order books full and avoid dependence on what is beginning to look like a market that can no longer be relied upon for steady growth.

UK manufacturers still surviving may be forgiven for taking a certain amount of satisfaction for seeing what they have known as reality beginning to affect their feather-bedded European counterparts. But, it must be a very hollow satisfaction. For while the Western Europeans are looking east, our few major players are looking to Western Europe for reliable and consistent growth.

Are we being left behind again?

■ It is perhaps opportune that incoming president of the BCC, Bill Cottham, should call for distinction between the BCC's bus and its coach operator members, and new sections of membership.

Allegations that the BCC Conference was of limited use to coach operators were fair comment. Not one paper singled out the coach industry for special attention. Yes, coach operators have got the BCC's Coaching Symposium. Last weekend's conference resembled the Bus Symposium, excellent though it was.

If Mr Cottham gets his way - and he appears to be confident - there will be additional sections of membership for suppliers and light rail. At that point, the BCC will have to decide whether to organise four conferences, or roll them all into one. If it took the latter route, maybe it could call it the BCC Conference?

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### **Editor in chief/associate publisher**

Mark Barton

### **Editor**

Mike Morgan

### **News and technical editor**

Richard Simpson

### **Production editor**

Frank Forster

### **Tourism editor**

Mark Williams

### **Northern news editor**

Andrew Jarosz

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Nicky Curd

### **Production assistant**

Kay Jeffries

### **Subscription inquiries**

EMAP Business Publishing Ltd

Tel - 081 868 4499

### **Subscription sales**

Lorrie Finley

Tel - 0733 63100

### **Publishing director**

Ian Griffin

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MEMBERS





COACH AND BUS WEEK ENDING 7 NOVEMBER 1992

■ **A management/employee buyout bid** for Lothian Region Transport has been turned down by the local council's ruling Labour group. Lothian Regional Council's finance chairman proposed the deal in an attempt to pre-empt Government pressure for all municipalities to be disposed of by competitive multi-tender sales. LRT managing director Charles Evans said he did not see why the company should be sold at all, and disposal to a private operator could only lead to higher fares and worse service. Page 6.

■ **Plaxton has stepped up its assault** on the European and home coach markets with versions of the Prestige 350 on Volvo's B12R chassis and a new 10-metre Premier 320 available to special order. The first 10-metre vehicles are going to Capital Coaches of Heathrow for airport/hotel transfer work. Sales of the Prestige in France are to be handled by Volvo, with production under way for next season after a favourable reception from operators. Page 7.

■ **Cuts in staff and services** are being forced on employee-owned Lincoln City Transport by reductions in support payments from the city council. With £88,000 of concessionary fares support and £40,000 in service support going, the bus company has withdrawn some Sunday and evening services and made nine staff redundant. Managing director Bob Hind said the number of passengers using the concessionary scheme had plummeted after free travel was abolished in favour of a 30p flat fare. Page 10.

■ **Two Hull City Council senior officers** have been appointed to the board of troubled municipal KHCT in response to Government pressure for the company to meet its legal duty and have three executive directors. Alan Gotts and Michael des Forges become acting general manager and finance director respectively. Page 15.

## COACH AND BUS EVENTS:

- November 12: Interior Safety of Passenger Transport seminar, IMechE, London, tel 071 222 7899, Fax: 071 222 4557.
- November 17: Buses Worldwide, Fred Tallant Hall, London. Ian Johnston, 3 Cypress Drive, Fleet, Hants GU13 9HE.
- November 24: Omnibus Society Meeting. Arthur Townsend - Has Anything Changed? London Transport, 55 Broadway. Barry Lejeune, tel 071 918 3295.
- November 30 - December 2: Computer-aided Operating Systems and Traffic in the Cities conference. Hotel Sofitel, Paris, France. Francois Barbier, tel 010 33 1 46 11 3535, or Fax Jean-Jacques Marchand, 010 33 1 40 16 1172.
- January 15 to 31: 1993 British Coach Owners Study Tour to United Bus Owners of America conference and show, Miami, and Mexico. Tel: 0235 812127.
- March 27 1993: The Future For Public Transport In The West Midlands - RTP/CIT/RICS one-day joint regional conference on transport and planning. Birmingham Polytechnic. Elaine Taylor, tel: 021 331 5112.

## ■ BUS

# UK's first bio-diesel trial

READING Buses is the first company in the UK to run vehicles on Diesel-Bi - a vegetable-based alternative fuel, made from oilseed rape. The official 'pouring' ceremony was performed by minister for public transport, Roger Freeman.

The fuel, produced by Italian manufacturer Novamont, a member of the Ferruzzi Montedison Group, has met with considerable success within other European countries, including Italy,

France, Austria and Germany. The UK's first trial is seen as a major step in the quest for a greener future and the outcome is eagerly awaited by members of the transport, environmental and farming communities.

Diesel-Bi has environmental benefits over traditional petroleum-based products, is a renewable energy form and vehicles require no engine modification. For three months, Reading Buses will run

three of its fleet of 200 vehicles on the rape-methyl ester fuel which generates almost no emissions of sulphur dioxide, one of the principal components of acid rain. Carbon particulates, aromatic compounds and black smoke are also reduced.

Paul Shepherd, Reading Buses engineering director, said: "This initiative marks the commencement of what may be a new era in transport technology."

## ■ BUS

# Bowler replaces Hilditch at MR(N)

By Andrew Jarosz

DRAWLANE bosses are remaining tight lipped on the future of subsidiary Midland Red North of Cannock after drafting in Richard Bowler to replace managing director Chris Hilditch.

In spite of various rumours, it is not yet clear whether Mr Hilditch has resigned or is still on the company payroll, but he is not available for comment.

Dawson Williams, group operations director of Drawlane Transport, did not wish to comment or issue a statement at this time.

Mr Bowler, currently managing director of Manchester-based Bee Line Buzz and Macclesfield-based C-Line, has taken on additionally responsibilities at Cannock, but was unwilling to discuss the changes.

Mr Hilditch, who took over the reins at Midland Red North soon after it was purchased from the National Bus Company in 1988, is widely acknowledged to have strengthened and expanded the company from

its all-time low at the time of purchase. Industry observers think he would have been unlikely to have left of his own volition, although it is not inconceivable that he might have been looking for a fresh challenge.

Mr Hilditch's father Geoffrey was formerly one of the Drawlane board members during its formative years before resigning from the company near the end of 1989. This had followed a sideways move during the year from group managing director.

## ■ BUS

# New BCC president's plan

BUS & Coach Council president Bill Cottham has revealed, in an exclusive interview, plans for a new *Buses Mean Business* initiative to build on the campaign.

Last year, BCC had suggested a list of demonstration projects and the Government responded with an allocation of £10 million.

"I believe we need to go forward, it's not the end of the story and we have got to keep the momentum going," Mr Cottham said.

The proposal, soon to be put to the full council, is that there should be a keystone research project undertak-

ing, aimed at determining, measuring, and quantifying the contribution made by public transport to the prosperity of the local economy.

"I think the industry needs to demonstrate it through an independent piece of research, properly and rigorously carried out, which then will be an important aspect of the transport debate. It would be a major help in establishing whether these demonstration projects are successful and whether further public money should be put into developing bus priority schemes etc," he said.

The plan envisages choosing one pilot area, measuring traffic patterns, journey purposes, talking to business, commerce and local shops and specifically looking at public transport and the contributions it can make as well as trying to quantify the value of the contribution that is made.

Other urban areas would then be chosen with the application of the pilot study to try to quantify public transport's contribution. A few local authorities have done smaller-scale studies in their own areas.

■ Interview: Page 23. **CBW**



## ■ COACH AND BUS

## Claribel's recipe for success

COACHES with conductors are the unusual recipe for success being tried by independent Claribel Coaches against West Midlands Travel on the 94 route from Birmingham Lower Bull Street in the city centre to Chelmsley Wood.

Claribel's bus operations manager Alf Smith said the service had been welcomed by passengers since its start late last month and his Ford coaches were carrying full loads out of the city centre in spite of vigorous competition from West Midlands Travel.

Mr Smith said an on-coach customer survey had already gained over 100 positive responses, and there was a possibility that the route could be converted to buses before Christmas.

## ■ COACH AND BUS

## WMT told: 'Re-test your entire fleet'

By Richard Simpson

leaks and damaged seats.

Speaking at the Birmingham disciplinary inquiry, West Midlands traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh said: "It has grieved me and disappointed me to find that the company which I always held as being the leader in the industry has been called before me to face disciplinary charges."

Mr Pugh said that the standards required from bus operators were the same whether they operated one or 1,800 buses. It was admitted that many of the defects listed on the prohibitions affected public safety, which was something no bus company should ever have allowed.

His order means that West Midlands Travel will have to perform 450 extra MOT tests in the nine-month

EMPLOYEE-owned West Midlands Travel has been given nine months to get its 1,800-strong fleet re-MOT tested after 108 of its vehicles attracted prohibition notices between the end of January and the beginning of April.

The duration of the company's licence has been cut so that it now expires at the end of July 1993 instead of November 1996, and it has been told that it could suffer a drastic reduction in fleet numbers if another prohibition indicating neglect is given before then.

Of the 343 buses examined, 66 were given immediate prohibitions and 42 declared in need of repair. Twelve of the prohibitions were marked neglect.

Among other defects, the examiners found faulty brakes, broken lights, bell pushes that did not work, oil



period.

A spokeswoman for West Midlands Travel said: "Standards have risen so much over the years that even though we were trying to im-

prove standards we were not quite keeping up."

● A full report of the hearing will appear in the Licensing and Legal columns of *Coach and Bus Week*.

## ■ COACH AND BUS

## Going out with a winner

ONE of out-going BCC president Graham Smith's last tasks in office was to draw the name of the winner of a dozen bottles of bubbly and a set of crystal champagne flutes - the incentive to help with Coach and Bus Week's Scania-sponsored TAS Industry Questionnaire.

Aided by Nick Leach of Scania UK (left), Mr Smith's hand of fate picked Murray Shepherd, of Lothian Transit... much to the consternation of Charles Evans, of Lothian Region Transport, present at the draw! Mr Shepherd was unable to attend.



## ■ COACH AND BUS

## Change pledge by Freeman

AT the Bus & Coach Council's annual conference, Minister of State for Public Transport Roger Freeman promised changes to current registration rules.

The busy conference was told any changes would be the result of consultation with the industry. Mr Freeman said legislation to force the sell-off of municipals was unlikely to be produced until after next year.

● NEW BCC president Bill Cottham promised a review

of the current membership system to a new classification separating bus and coach operators, and embracing non-operators and the light rail sector.

● A TOP environmental scientist from the RAC told BCC delegates that motorists were ready for a shift to public transport but demanded better quality vehicles with lower emissions.

■ FULL coverage of the major news from the BCC Conference is on page 16.

## ■ BUS

## Capital's clippies go electronic

LONDON Buses has introduced an electronic replacement for the Gibson ticket machines which have been used by conductors on its crewed buses for the last 40 years. The new Clipper machine is based on the Wayfarer electronic device used on LBL's OPO buses, but is lighter and has its own internal batteries.



■ **PLANS** for a rapid transit system to link Fareham, Gosport and Portsmouth city centre are to go out to public consultation before the end of the year, according to Hampshire County Council. The public will be asked to comment on which of three options they would prefer to see: guided bus, Guided Light Transit or light rail. Badgerline, People's Provincial and Gosport Ferries are backing a GLT system.

■ **SCANIA** is to build chassis and complete buses in Poland at a new joint-venture plant at Slupsk, near the Baltic coast. Assembly of R113 and R143 chassis will be the first task, eventually leading to more Polish componentry being incorporated. The first year's production will be around 200 units.

■ **THE** latest order for 50 Wrights-bodied Dennis Darts will bring the total number of Wright-bodied buses sold to London Buses up to 250 in two years. East London is to take the new buses next spring for use in Barking and Dagenham.

■ **PARK** and ride services in Shrewsbury run by Williamson's Motorways are being extended for Christmas. An extra weekday and Saturday service, under contract to the borough and county councils, will now operate from Severn Trent Water car park at Shelton. Williamson's uses three Dennis Darts on the routes.

■ **A NEW** midibus route from Vauxhall through Wandsworth, Stockwell, Brixton, Tulse Hill to Norwood, then onward to Gipsy Hill and Crystal Palace is being run by South London Transport. Route 322, branded 'Lambeth Connexions' replaces existing LT route 2 with 10 to 12-minute frequency vehicles on weekdays and Saturdays.

■ **LIGHTING** and accessory maker Britax has been awarded BS 5750 part 1, having qualified for part 2 in 1986. The new award covers Britax design and development as well as quality control of manufacture.

■ **WINNER** of a case of wine in the Hansar Finance Draw at Expocoach was Rosemary Nunn of Southampton-based Gemini Travel.

## ■ COACH AND BUS

# Lothian's buses stay municipal

SCOTLAND'S last remaining municipal operator, Lothian Region Transport, has been turned down for a management/employee buy-out by the local council's ruling Labour group.

The regional council was attempting to pre-empt Government plans for forced privatisation. Lothian Regional Council finance chairman David Begg had submitted a motion to the Labour council group proposing the MEBO sell-off

By Mark Williams

- which flew in the face of Government commitment to competitive, multi-tender sales.

Lothian Region Transport's managing director, Charles Evans, told Coach and Bus Week that his concern was not that 600 vehicle LRT should be sold to a MEBO, but that it should be sold at all.

"I am wholly opposed to the sale to the private sector



Charles Evans remains opposed to private sector sales

of bus companies," he said. "Why should Lothian Region Transport be sold at all?"

"We've done everything the Government asked of us and more. We are now more than arm length, and we haven't seen a councillor for six years.

We have paid off £13.5 million in debt and are now the jewel in the crown.

"What we are talking about is not privatisation but

a change in share ownership. Let's be honest, all private owners are in it for their own benefit. I warn the Lothian public that this can lead only to higher fares and poorer services," he said.

"Minister for Public Transport, Roger Freeman, has said the Government doesn't live in a world of dogma. If so, what possible reason could there be for selling LRT?"

## ■ BUS

# Bus station is threatened

THE Scottish Transport Group has advertised the lease on Glasgow's main bus station for sale, leading to fears that the facility will be lost to the city's operators.

STG, which is controlled by the Scottish Office, said the Buchanan Street site could remain as a bus station or accommodate an office, hotel or leisure scheme, with or without a smaller bus sta-

tion facility.

Strathclyde's chairman of roads and transportation, Malcolm Waugh, has asked the Government to think again, saying that on-street parking for hundreds of displaced buses could cause a massive rise in traffic congestion and air pollution.

Buchanan Street will be the only bus station in Glasgow when the city's Ander-

son station is closed for redevelopment in the next two years.

Mr Waugh said Strathclyde PTE would make an offer for the lease, but he did not rate its chances of success very highly. Meanwhile the council will call on Scottish Secretary Ian Lang to reconsider the future of the site.

"We will tell him it is

necessary that Buchanan Street remains a bus station," Mr Waugh said.

"I believe the Buchanan Street station would be attractive to developers, even at a time of recession. It is a prime site and I am sure there would be someone with plenty of money who would be prepared to buy the lease and wait for things to improve."



Strathclyde's replacement deckers will be Alexander bodied, but with Leyland Olympian rather than Volvo chassis

## ■ BUS

# Fire work for Alexander

STRATHCLYDE Buses has chosen Alexander bodies for its 52 new Leyland Olympians - replacements vehicles for those lost in the £7 million fire at its Larkfield depot.

The Glasgow-based company has been hiring vehicles from Grampian, Tayside, Western Scottish, Busways and Nottingham City Transport since a blaze in May gutted the depot. Foul play is not suspected.

Strathclyde had made the decision to swell its fleet of Olympians to 100 long before it was decided which bodywork would be fitted. It is understood that Northern Counties was among those trying to get the contract.

The vehicles use the Cummins L10 engine and Voith auto transmission with integral retarder. Delivery will be early next year.

CBW



## COACH

# Plaxton steps up French sales drive

By Mike Morgan

WHILE stepping up its European sales drive, Plaxton has increased its Premiere range for the UK market. Its new generation coach body for Europe is now available as Prestige 350 on Volvo B12R and a new 10 metre Premiere 320 is to be built to special order.

Capital Coaches is the first to take the short Premiere based on Volvo B9M. Five will join the Heathrow-based company in January, followed by five full-size vehicles on B10M in March. The Capital B9Ms will have 43 reclining seats plus crew seat.

Having launched the 12 metre Premiere and Excalibur model, Plaxton has launched the 10 metre to cater for specialist needs, such as Capital's airport/hotel transfer work. Clive

Hodgson, Plaxton coach sales director, said: "We decided it was a segment of the market we wanted to be in. We have adapted the 3.2 metre high Premiere body to provide a short coach which gives operators and customers all the benefits of our full-sized bodies.

"We will be building them against specific orders for delivery for the 1993 season."

Meanwhile Plaxton says the Prestige 350 launch at Mitcar attracted strong positive comments from French operators.

Production vehicles for the French market will be going down the Eastfield line for next season.

The Prestige 350 - in effect a left-hand drive variant of the Excalibur, Plaxton's UK market flagship -



The new Prestige 350

has 49 reclining seats, tinted double-glazing, centre plug door, centre toilet, air-conditioning and Webasto. It follows the super-high 370 first seen at Kortrijk last year.

Mr Hodgson said: "France is a demanding market and in it we are competing with top-quality coaches from all of the key European builders.

"European sales have an important part to play in our marketing strategy. Our current coach models were developed from the outset to have European appeal."

Sales in France are being handled by Volvo France, working in close collaboration with Plaxton's own sales and marketing team at Scarborough.

■ RICHARD Pearch, founder of AVS (Northampton) Ltd and the Autotek range of audio/video equipment, has formed a new company, Aftermarket Coach Supplies, manufacturing a similar range of products after the demise of its parent company Sonicare Ltd. Contact Mr Pearch on 0536 416979.

■ THE corporation of London is to create 'bus stop clearways' at all bus stops within the City of London. Under the new arrangements, which run from 7am to 7pm, only buses and taxis will be allowed to stop in the designated zones. Other vehicles will risk a fixed penalty. The move follows a successful trial at 12 City bus stops.

■ VOLVO bus has won an order to supply 72 single deck city buses to the Urban Transport Organisation of Thessaloniki (OASTH). All bodywork on the Swedish-built B10Ms will be fitted by Saracakis Brothers SA, Volvo's exclusive agent in Greece. Sixty will be articulated buses.

■ CUT-price fares come to the London Borough of Kingston in November, with a one-day bus pass for the area costing just £1, a reduction of 45p on the normal price. Nick Newton, the general manager of London Transport's tendered bus division, which provides most of the services in the area, said: "This is an excellent initiative by London Transport. Kingston is an important retail centre, and if it is possible to encourage people to use the bus it will relieve congestion on the roads and make shopping easier for all of us, especially with the opening of the new Bantall's Centre which will attract thousands more visitors."

■ LONDON Transport has launched a campaign to stem the estimated £14.5 million lost in bus fare evasion each year. Advertising campaigns will run in London editions of the Sun and Mirror and 52 local papers across the capital, warning evaders that they face fines of up to £1,000. Using the slogan "Pay the right fare, not the penalty," the campaign is the first by LT aimed specifically at bus passengers.

## LRT

# Metrolink doubles frequency

MANCHESTER'S Metrolink LRT is doubling its daytime frequency next week and planning to introduce Sunday services in the near future.

Chief executive Chelvin Hibbert claimed the system was carrying the equivalent of 7.5 million passengers per year.

"Because of this success, we want to offer an improved service. We will be doubling our frequency for most of the day with trams running every six minutes instead of every 12 off peak," he said.

From next year, passengers will be able to book through tickets on the trams at British Rail stations. Metrolink times will also be included on BR timetables.

Greater Manchester PTE director general Chris Mulligan confirmed that further plans for Metrolink extensions were being formulated. "By the turn of the year, we expect to submit to the Government our plans for the service to be extended to Oldham and Rochdale. If they are approved, they could be operating next year or in 1994."

## BUS

# Operators holding GMPTA fare rise

OPERATORS in Greater Manchester have joined forces to reject the implementation of the fares increase for concessionary passengers being introduced by Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority (Coach and Bus Week, October 3)

Members of the prepaid ticketing panel have agreed not to increase the cost of prepaid Clippercard tickets in line with the general cash fare increase which goes up

from 23p to 25p.

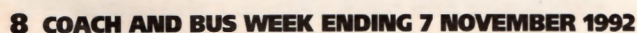
Chairman of the operators' panel, Ben Colson, of Ribblesdale said the companies would charge the revised cash fare but ensure that ten-journey Clippercards stayed at their current price of £2.

"Considering that travel by children and pensioners is such a sizeable part of the whole market, the operators felt that it was inopportune to raise prepaid fares at this time," he said. **CBW**



Metrolink trams will run every six minutes off peak







## ■ BUS

# Dennis sells Dart chassis into Europe

By Mark Barton

A YEAR after announcing its export drive into Europe, Dennis has sold its first Dart chassis to a continental operator. A full-size Lance demonstrator is to follow.

Major Dutch operator NZH has taken a 9.2-metre version, bodied by Berkhof, for evaluation in service north of Amsterdam. In pride of place on the Dennis stand at last week's Autobus RAI show in Maastricht, the Berkhof Junior body has two doors, 24 anti-vandal seats and room for 56 passengers. Body panelling is made of polyester and, as on all Berkhof bodies from 1993,

the frame is made of Cromwell stainless steel. Price with Telma retarder, which is standard on Euro Darts, and electronic destination blinds was nearly £84,000.

According to Dennis, the Dart offers the NZH group, which runs 1,900 buses, the chance to create a fresh image for public transport and run services to previously unserved areas at a time when Government subsidies are under scrutiny.

Nick van Tript of NZH said: "We were aware that the Dart was proving particularly popular in London and after talking to London Buses and looking at the



The Berkhof Junior bodied Dart

Dennis production lines decided to take one for an extended trial on selected routes to measure its performance for ourselves."

Dennis sales and marketing director, Vernon Edwards, said that, in just a year, Dennis had gone from showing its first vehicle in Europe (Kortrijk in October)

to establishing outlets in Holland and Belgium, appointing a Benelux sales manager, and selling the first Dart into Europe.

"And now, straight after the show," he told *Coach and Bus Week* in Maastricht, "the Lance is going into build with Berkhof as a full-size city bus. That will be a

demonstrator, but I'm hoping by the time we have finished it we will have a name in the frame." The original Berkhof bodied demonstrator is now travelling back from a trade fair in Iran, where Mr Edwards said it was enthusiastically received.

● *Autobus RAI show report* page 18.

## ■ COACH AND BUS

# Stagecoach's 49-seat Volvo B10Ms on way

VOLVO Bus has revealed further details of the B10Ms which have replaced a large part of the Stagecoach order for B6 midibuses (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 10).

All 100 have the Volvo THD 101GB engine fitted to the D10M, the engine rated at 212 bhp (163 kW) and matched to a ZF 5HP500 automatic gearbox and low speed axle to give a 56 mph

top speed.

The chassis will have Alexander PS type aluminium bodies, the majority to bus specification and some for dual-purpose operation.

All bodies will accommodate 49 seated passengers plus standees.

Chassis supply is already under way, with delivery to Alexander com-

pleted by the year end. Finished vehicles will be handed over to Stagecoach at the rate of six per week from next month.

Delays in the start of the B6 rear-engined midibus chassis led to Stagecoach cancelling half of its 200-vehicle order, but the Perth-based company agreed to take the mid-engined B10M instead.

## ■ COACH AND BUS

# Gardner sale expected soon

A SALE of engine manufacturer Gardner by its parent, the Varsity Corporation of north America, is expected within the next couple of months, according to a well-placed source (*Coach and Bus Week*, September 19).

While the identity of the buyer is not yet clear, it seems the factory is confi-

dent that it has a good future ahead of it irrespective of ownership.

The recently-launched LG1200 bus engine is currently completing its Euro 1 emissions certification, and the factory is said to have a healthy order book for both new engine build and unit remanufacture.

## ■ BUS

# Viscount marshalls minis

CAMBUS Holdings subsidiary, Peterborough-based Viscount, is facing up to increasing competition by upgrading its minibus fleet with seven Marshall SPV-bodied Iveco 59.12s

Viscount has been challenged by Ralph Garrett's Fen Travel on its key routes and it claims to be the only bus company in Peterbor-

ough investing in new vehicles in any quantity. John Tate, Viscount managing director, said: "It is our policy to offer passengers the best in terms of quality and comfort.

"However, new vehicles do not necessarily mean increased costs. A great advantage of these Marshall Ivecos is that they are not

only attractively designed, but they are also very economical to run and maintain. A high level of reliability is another major factor for us."

Viscount opted for 27 seats and eight standees with two luggage pens. The buses are equipped with automatic transmissions, Telma retarders and Vultron destination blinds.

CBW



Destination Peterborough: Viscount Iveco



## ■ BUS

# Lincoln council cuts hit LCT jobs and services

CUTS in city council support payments are forcing a reduction in staff and services at Lincoln City Transport, as over eight per cent of revenue is wiped out of the employee-owned company.

Reductions of £88,000 in concessionary fares support and £40,000 in tendered service support have led to the withdrawal of some Sunday

and evening services from this Sunday and nine job cuts which include five permanent drivers and one with a temporary contract.

Managing director Bob Hind, who is also md of Derby City Transport, said the cuts came out of the blue and the money had been permanently lost to the industry.

By Andrew Jarosz

"They decided to reduce the supported services this year but have only just informed us. The concessionary fares payments have been cut after a physical check revealed that fewer pensioners were travelling but the council set that in motion itself by abolishing free

fares some time ago and it now costs 30p for a pensioner," he said.

Mr Hind revealed that the company, which has an annual turnover of £1.7 million, could not absorb the loss of £128,000 in a full year. Three administrative staff in addition to the drivers are facing redundancy out of the 83-strong workforce.



Bob Hind

"The concessionary scheme has lost its attractiveness and the council could have put back some money to improve things. Instead, it has chosen to plough it back into general spending," Mr Hind said.

## ■ COACH

# RAI coach of the year

ARGUABLY the most expensive 44-seater coach in the world, Kassbohrer's Setra 300 series is the new international Coach of the Year.

The 300 series was awarded the trophy at last week's Autobus RAI show in Maastricht by the judging panel of 12 journalists, who placed it ahead of Van Hool's A300 citybus and Volvo's rear engined B12.

The German-made S 315 HDH super highliner, which carried the award at Maastricht, retails for DM 850,000. At present exchange rates, that is over £370,000. With 44 seats fitted that works out at nearly £8,000 per seat.

■ Autobus RAI show report: Page18.



The Setra S 315 HDH super highliner, coach of the year at Maastricht

## ■ COACH AND BUS

# Copier warning

OPERATORS are warned to read the small print on photocopier contracts. Some small businesses have found it easier to fold than to pay the penalties arising from their contracts. This is the startling conclusion arising from an investigation by the Campaign to Clean up Copier Contracts.

A spokesman for the Campaign, which is supported by the CBI and 41 MPs from all parties, said: "We have had hundreds of calls from anguished small business, many of which have become the unwitting

victims of unethical photocopier dealers selling unfair contracts. The small print is often misleading and can contain severe penalty clauses, which in some cases have led companies to bankruptcy."

The campaign has received several calls from coach and bus companies, who have found themselves trapped into a lengthy or onerous copier contract.

A legislative working party is urging amendments to current legislation.

Contact the campaign on 071 730 8525.

## ■ COACH

# Last chance to book for package deal seminar

## Package deal seminar registration form

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Position(s) in company.....

Company name.....

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Coach and Bus Week reserves the right to close entries if the seminar is over-subscribed

EVERY coach tour operator will be affected by new consumer protection legislation from January 1, and this is your last chance to get a place on our seminar which will explain the new package deal rules.

Organised in conjunction with Stephen Rogers Marketing, the seminar takes place at the Novotel, Coventry on Friday, November 13, and places are filling fast.

Wording in brochures will soon be strictly regulated and monitored by the Trading Standards Office. But even more far reaching is the effect of the European Community's Article 7...the directive which insists on financial protection for every holidaymaker.

The morning session will explain what the new legislation says and deal with the guidelines for brochures, what they now have to say and how the Government has provided enforcement of the rules.

After lunch, three speakers will deal with the issues of bonding, insurance and trust accounts, one of which must be provided for every tour. The day is rounded off with an open forum.

The cost is £65 per delegate, plus VAT. All applications must be received by November 11.

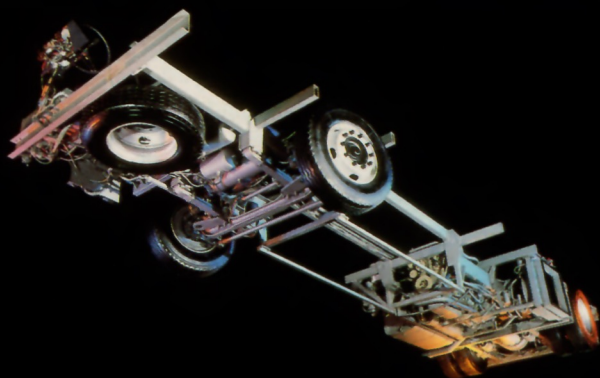
Apply on the official form (left) to Stephen Rodgers Marketing Ltd, 6 Transom House, Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6AH. **CBW**



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# DENNIS

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Falling passenger numbers have hit InterCity

## ■ LRT AND BUS

# French win Croydon LRT

FRENCH public transport management company Transdev has secured its first British contract by joining with Tarmac and AEG in a project development group for the Croydon Tramlink light rail scheme. It also announced its intention to enter the British bus business.

Managing director of Transdev's UK subsidiary, Nick Buckley said the company was looking for bus operators to help develop its light rail passenger networks. There were opportunities to establish bus networks through tendering, he said.

Transdev can call upon a wide range of expertise from France, where it oper-

ates 34 urban and 36 interurban bus networks. It also runs trams and the total fleet is 4,605 buses and 98 trams.

Under the terms of the agreement with Croydon Council and London Transport, Transdev, Tarmac and AEG will together contribute more than £1 million of development work and will be obliged to bid for the construction and operating contract in Croydon.

While the Government sees this as a means of involving private capital in its light rail schemes and reducing the need for grants, these schemes at the same time give the French company an opportunity to expand in the UK.

## Freeman launches GLT drive for Kingswood

BADGERLINE Rapid Transit is looking at ways of including the Kingswood borough of Bristol in its Guided Light Transit schemes, even though it cannot use the route of the East Bristol Cycleway.

At a presentation given by the Light Rail Transit Association, James Freeman, the project director for GLT in Bristol said: "The challenge is that the cycleway is not available for use as a rapid transit route.

"This is a view shared by many councillors and that being the case, the requirement is to find a fast and reasonably uninhibited route from the city centre into Kingswood.

"Inevitably, this means using the streets and this decision would have far-reaching implications for local people, it is essential that locally-elected members have the first say on where this route should go."

He said that he was awaiting the county council's transport plan and would be happy to work with local authorities in investigating the various possibilities and solutions.

Mr Freeman said the presentation had been given a positive reception: "The overall prospect of rapid transit seems to be something that councillors in Kingswood think is a good idea. They made it clear they don't want to be left out of the proposals."

## ■ RAIL

# Competition plans hit by profit slump

By Richard Simpson

GOVERNMENT plans for private-sector competition with InterCity have been dealt a massive blow by the news that the state-run express rail company is set to return its first loss for four years.

InterCity is not due to announce its results until next July, but sources within British Rail say that its only chance of returning even a tiny profit is if the British economy emerges from recession before its finan-

cial year end in March.

Unlike Network South-East and Regional Railways, InterCity gets no Government subsidy and cannot carry money forward from year to year.

In its last financial year, the business saw earnings fall and recorded only £2 million profit on a turnover of £896 million.

Measures such as the

controversial Apex discounted tickets for long-distance pre-booked passengers which have provoked such anger among coach operators have been introduced in an attempt to encourage travel by rail.

Declining revenue with falling fares and travel because of the recession will undermine plans to open its five main routes to competition from rival operators (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 31).

## Makers 'have only two years work'

BRITAIN'S rail manufacturing industry will have no work within two years if the Government continues to starve British Rail of money for new investment, according to a study carried out for the country's train makers by consultants Steer Davies Gleave.

Although order books are currently satisfactory, they will become progressively empty after next year, says

the study, which was commissioned by Eurotunnel, the Railway Industry Association and pressure group Transport 2000.

The Government's proposal that a separate track authority makes a profit on charging train operators to use its lines will also hit investment and should be removed from any privatisation bill.

According to the study.

"Railways do not earn enough to give any return on infrastructure assets. If a return is required, extra charges will have to be imposed on train operators and, in many cases, this will lead to extra subsidies."

Under such a regime, if the track authority cannot impose sufficiently hefty charges, it will start to close lines rather than bear the cost of maintaining them.

## ■ COACH AND BUS

# Scania's seven speeds at RAI

A NEW version of Scania's seven-speed gearbox made its debut at the Autobus RAI show in Maastricht last week.

Called the GR8101R, it is fitted with an integral hydraulic retarder, which is operated by a control on the dashboard or near the brake pedal. Scania also launched a version of its K113 two-axle coach chassis with independent front suspension, called the K113CLA, at Maastricht.

DAF Bus was showing the SB225, a variant of the SB220 bus underframe, which forms the basis for Optare's Delta. The SB225 has a raised frame level between the front and rear modules, allowing all seats to face forward. DAF is also now making its SB3000 underframe with a 400 bhp ATi engine.

Volvo says it has now

won nearly 400 orders for its new B12 rear-engined coach chassis. As well as its beautifully built 0404 coach, Mercedes was also showing the 0340, built - at Mercedes Benz Turk AS in Turkey. Not so beautifully made, power comes from a 340 bhp OM 441 diesel. Retarder, air suspension and ABS is standard.

Mercedes has also developed a stylish minibus for Holland in conjunction with Dutch firm Duvedec. Called the 0100 City it can carry 23 passengers and is based on the MB 100 van chassis. Entrance height is just 350mm.

Having launched a low floor bus two years ago, Berkhof has now come up with one powered by LPG. Based on the same MAN chassis, the vehicle carries its tanks on its roof and has a range of 600 km. Six have

been ordered by the city of Amsterdam.

Van Hool, which considers Holland as its second home market, gave its new 3.4-metre high EOS 90 its second public display in so many months. It also now has a truly low (and flat) floor midibus in the A508 PL.

TAM is now proudly calling itself Slovenia's coach-builder and last year sold 1,587 fully-built vehicles and chassis - mainly to the former Soviet Union, what was East Germany, Egypt and Greece.

At Maastricht it restricted itself to a new 330 bhp touring coach, 7.5-metre midibus, single-deck citybus and a new Cummins powered highline coach of "extraordinary aesthetic external appearance."

● Autobus RAI show report page 18.

CBW





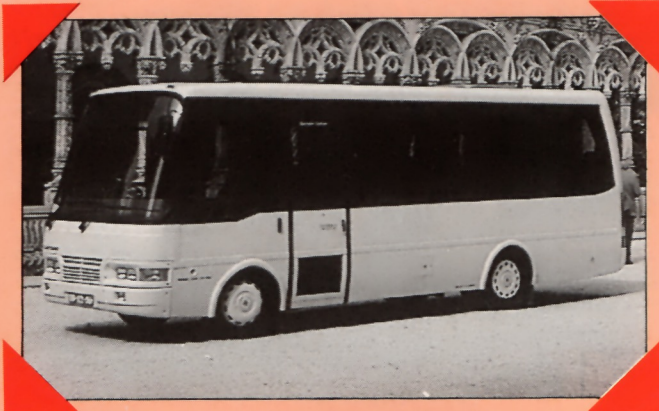
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- 1989 (F) DENNIS JAVELIN 12 metre – DUPLÉ 320, 57 seats, power door, tinted windows, radio/pa/cassette ..... **£59,950**  
 1988 (E) DAF – LAG PANORAMIC, 49 recliners, courier seat, centre sunken toilet, centre continental door, double glazed, full curtains, refrigerator, hot water boiler, boxed and wired for video and 2 monitors, radio/pa/cassette, driver's berth ..... **£72,500**  
 1988 (E) DAF MB 230 DKFL – CAETANO ALGARVE EXECUTIVE, 49/53 recliners, centre demountable toilet, courier seat, double glazed, continental door, radio/pa/cassette ..... **£62,500**  
 1984 (B) DAF MB 200 DKFL – DUPLÉ LASER II, 53 seats, Telma, power door, tinted windows, lockers ..... **£34,500**  
 1984 (A) DAF MB 200 DKTL – CAETANO ALPHA GT, 53 recliners, power door, tinted windows ..... **£24,500**  
 1983 (Y) BOVA EUROPA II, 50 recliners, power door, soft trim ..... **£25,000**  
 1981 (W) LEYLAND LEOPARD – DUPLÉ DOMINANT III, 57 seats, power door, side lockers ..... **£12,500**

## MIDI/MINI BUSES

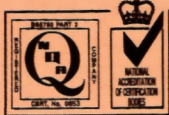
- 1991 (J) TOYOTA HI-ACE, 11 seats, side sliding loading door, full soft luxury trim, radio/cassette, metallic paintwork ..... **£12,750**  
 1988 (E) TOYOTA OPTIMO GL, 18 seats, tinted windows, power door, forced air ventilation ..... **£25,900**  
 1985 (B) BEDFORD PIK – PLAXTON SUPREME IV, 29 seats, power door, soft trim ..... **£19,750**

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### BOVA

- 1984 BOVA EUROPA MK III. 53 reclining seats + courier, Webasto, radio/pa/cassette, rear continental door, MoT April 1993.

### LEYLAND

- 1989 (F) LEYLAND TIGER (CUMMINS L10). Plaxton 3200, 6 speed ZF manual, Telma, 53 reclining seats, double glazed, radio/pa/cassette. Choice of 5 only. Current MoT's.  
 1990 (G) LEYLAND TIGER (CUMMINS L10). Plaxton 3200, ZF automatic, 53 reclining seats, double glazed, radio/pa/cassette. Choice of 2 only. Current MoT's.  
 1987 (D) LEYLAND TIGER (TL11-260). Jonckheere P50, 6 speed ZF (splitter), 50 reclining seats + courier, (re-trimmed Holdsworth moquette), curtains, rear continental door, N/S/R toilet. MoT June 1993.  
 1982 (X) LEYLAND LEOPARD (5 SPEED SEMI-AUTOMATIC) – Willowbrook 003, express doors, 44 seats + 8 standees. Current MoT.

### VOLVO

- 1990 (G) VOLVO B10M – Van Hool Alizee 'II', 6 speed ZF, Telma, 49 reclining seats + courier, footrests, centre toilet, double glazed, radio/pa/cassette. Choice of 2 only. current MoT's  
 1989 (F) VOLVO B10M – Van Hool Alizee 'H', 6 speed ZF, Telma, 49 reclining seats + courier, footrests, centre toilet, double glazed, radio/pa/cassette. Choice of 3 only. Current MoT's.  
 1988 (E) VOLVO B10M – Plaxton 3200, ZF, Telma, 53 reclining seats + courier, double glazed, choice of 2 only. Current MoT's. **BOTH SOLD**  
 1986 VOLVO B10M – Jonckheere Jubilee, 49 reclining seats + courier, rear sunken toilet plus full specification. Current MoT.

### TOYOTA

- 1987 (D) TOTOYA OPTIMO, 19 seats + courier, radio/pa/cassette, full drawn curtains. MoT April 1993.

### MERCEDES

- 1985 (B) MERCEDES – Reeve Burgess High Roof, 12 high-back seats, radio. MoT February 1993.

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## ■ COACH AND BUS

# Hull City Council men join board of KHCT

HULL City Council has appointed two of its senior officers to the board of the KHCT bus undertaking as a temporary measure, after Department of Transport pressure for the company to honour its legal duty to have three executive directors.

Alan Gotts, currently deputy director of Hull City Services, the council's direct labour organisation which handles refuse collection, has been appointed to a temporary post of executive

By Andrew Jarosz

director and acting general manager.

Michael des Forges, the city treasurer, formalises his position with the company as finance director (*Coach and Bus Week*, July 11). Roy Mitchell, already appointed as operations director, is the third executive member of the board.

KHCT chairman Councillor Brian Wilkinson thought there had been a

poor response to attempts to recruit a new managing director: "Unfortunately the replies to our advertisements were not what the board felt the company needed. We will continue to advertise for a managing director as well as for the third executive post."

Councillor Wilkinson confirmed that investigations into the company's losses of up to £750,000 on its engineering activities in the last financial year had not

uncovered any irregularities. He said that the losses had not originally been spotted in the accounting procedures.

This was supported by Inspector Nigel Stevens of the Humberside Police, who said that the inquiry by the commercial branch had been concluded: "There is no evidence of any financial loss attributable to fraudulent activity of any company employee," he said.

■ Moves: Page 51.



Pride of the Road takes on EYMS

## ■ BUS

## Pride of the Road running in Hull

HUDDERSFIELD-based Pride of the Road started operations in Hull last week running three routes which compete with both KHCT and East Yorkshire.

Seven Leyland Nationals and nine staff are based at rented premises in Freightliner Road and are under the control of Huddersfield area manager Paul Roter.

Mr Roter said he was very pleased with the first week's operation and was adding two more routes to the network which will come on stream in the middle of

the month.

Maintenance facilities are being installed at the premises, although major work and regular checks will continue at the Huddersfield base.

■ KHCT is adding a new minibus route to Mapleworth Avenue on the west side of the city to "fill a gap in the network". Operations director Roy Mitchell claimed that ridership in the city was buoyant. "We've taken an extra £13,000 in fares per day during the Hull Fair week," he said. **CBW**

## ■ COACH AND BUS

## EYMS Group forms systems manufacturer

HULL-based EYMS Group is diversifying into manufacturing, with the formation of a new subsidiary, East Yorkshire Control Systems, which will manufacture and install electrical control systems.

The company has been formed by EYMS and two directors Peter Ashton and Tony Edmond, who were formerly employed by a local company, Fairburn Engineering of Hull.

The new company is based at an industrial unit and will supply control sys-

tems to industrial customers, like water companies.

EYMS joint managing director Godfrey Burley said the company had a good order book and would draw its marketing and financial support from the group.

"When the company is properly established, we see the possibility of it undertaking some bus-based projects, particularly in the field of electronic ticketing and destination displays," he said.

## ■ BUS

## Clipper makes comeback

THE Sheffield City Clipper will be re-introduced as a free service in the run-up to Christmas, as South Yorkshire PTE acts upon one of the recommendations put forward by deputy traffic commissioner Brian Horner, when he introduced his controversial ban on new services during the summer.

SYPTTE had supported a daily operation, which had originally been introduced

as a free service by South Yorkshire Transport using the ten articulated single deckers.

Its re-introduction was seen by Mr Horner as one way of reducing congestion in the city centre and has become particularly relevant as numerous central streets are closed to car traffic to enable the construction of Supertram.

The City Shopper, as it is

called by the PTE, will operate on six Saturdays from November 14 and the PTE has invited local bus operators to tender for the service. "If the service is a success in terms of the numbers who use it, there is a possibility of extending its scope, perhaps to include other weekdays or even to run a similar service throughout the year," said PTE director general Jim Russell.

## ■ COACH

## Cost cuts continue

KINGSTON upon Hull City Transport is continuing its cost-cutting exercise by announcing the imminent disposal of its two continental coach subsidiaries Voyage National of Lille and Kivits Reisen of Holland. The disposals continue the company's return to its core business and follow the announcement of the sale of its York Pullman subsidiary (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 17).

"Operations in Europe have come to an end," said operations director Roy Mitchell. "The board has decided to dispose of the companies very quickly, and, if there are no interested buyers, they will be closed down and the assets disposed of."

Voyage National, which was once a National Bus Company subsidiary, owns three of its coaches and is based at premises in Lille where the lease is up for renewal. The coaches include Jonckheere-bodied MANs and a Van Hool-bodied Volvo.

Kivits owns 10 of its 12 coaches which are all DAFs and Bovas with the exception of a Mercedes minibus. There is some land adjacent to the depot and residence that are all owned by the company.

Disposal of these subsidiaries will leave KHCT with only its Hull-based Blue & White buses and Kingstonian coaches as well as Hull-based training services.



## Computer revolution

CENTREWEST managing director Peter Hendy said trials with real-time bus information would revolutionise the image of the industry.

The BCC Conference heard that the launch last week of further advanced passenger information systems by Minister of Transport for London, Stephen Norris, emphasised that Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) now works and the path is set for sweeping changes.

Mr Hendy said he believed the complexity of handling timetable information from independent operators after deregulation would be an ideal task for the new London Bus Executive.

"I think it will also be in the public and industry's interests for the London Bus Executive to be able to discriminate against operators who are not willing to participate in a market that requires high-quality information."

## BR sell-off warning

INDEPENDENT special adviser Steven Bramall, of GJW Associates, told bus companies to expect the Government to avoid any monopolies when it sells BR.

"There have been many reports in the press that individual coach or bus operators may be interested in taking advantage in the ending of BR's monopoly," he told delegates.

"I suspect that the DTI is deeply concerned that the deregulation of British Rail will simply end up with a whole new raft of monopolies being created, and I am quite sure they will view this in the widest possible sense."

"In other words, if there is an individual operator who runs not only rail services but, in the same corridor, also operates buses and perhaps even airlines, the DTI will regard that as a monopoly."

# New president in shake-up pledge

By Mark Williams

NEW Bus and Coach Council president Bill Cottham pledged his commitment to ending the present membership classification and giving both the bus and coach industries a better deal.

Yorkshire Rider's managing director said the current section system was outdated, and that the Bus & Coach Council must begin to embrace a wider membership - particularly within the light rail industry.

"The artificial distinction between the A, B and C sections must go. The time has come for change."

"We need to recognise the inherent differences



Cottham: 'New deal'

between the coach and bus side, and we need to accommodate those differences by the creation of two distinct and separate sectors," he said.

"Light rapid transit is becoming an important provider of local public transport and BCC should expand to embrace those new modes. That can best be done by creating a separate Fixed Track sector."

Mr Cottham said the final tier of membership the BCC needed was a non-operator sector.

"We must recognise the very important role of the promoters and procurers of public transport."

"We should give serious consideration to bringing local authorities more within the fold of the BCC."

● Don't miss our exclusive interview with Bill Cottham on pages 23/24.

## Ministerial promise

MINISTER of State for Public Transport Roger Freeman last week promised a shake-up of route registration law, a tougher stance on municipal divestment of bus companies, and further attention focussed on monopolies.

"Margins are seriously under pressure. Every bus company I have visited in the last two and a half years has made me well aware of that fact. I am under no illusions. People all speak extremely frankly," he said.

"We need to arrest this decline in patronage as far as possible. If you look at the long term for the past 25 years, patronage has been consistently downwards."

"There is no more sensible way to convey large numbers of people in our urban areas than the bus. Building underground railways in London is enormously expensive and takes years. The bus does present an obvious way of conveying people relatively cheaply and in an environmentally friendly way."



Freeman: 'Margins falling'

He said support for investment in new vehicles must come from a UK manufacturing base: "This has contracted in the last two and a half years."

"I don't want to be in the position, as I made clear to the Commons last week, that in ten years, either British Rail or the bus industry has to look abroad for new equipment. That is nonsensical in terms of national economic planning," he said.

He said he had identified six ways in which the

Government would help the bus industry into better profitability, but warned that there would be no return to bus grants or resort to changes in the central taxation system.

The remainder of the DoT's £10 million bus priority grants would go to more ambitious examples of change, he warned. He said he would be consulting the BCC to find ways to ensure illegal parking would not snarl up bus lanes and stops.

He warned that the VI would be taking a tougher line on emissions, removing "promptly" smoky vehicles: "Operators can look forward to tough enforcement of those rules," he said.

Mr Freeman announced a rethink for registration and subsidised services: "I shall be issuing a consultation paper shortly specifically to cover registration, but also covering other topics, and I shall be formally consulting the industry and local authorities," he said.

## Motorists changing

ENVIRONMENTAL scientist Dr Jeremy Vanke of the RAC said motorists were now looking 'beyond their windscreens' for more and better public transport.

"The idea that the RAC believes the 'drive wherever and whenever you want' philosophy is frankly no longer acceptable," he told the BCC Conference.

"The benefits people get from motoring are going to deteriorate and we have to stop trying to cater for current growth."

Dr Vanke said there had to be a huge step in public transport provision to encourage motorists back to the bus but that the industry had to address the issue of pollution.

"Very few people at this conference would disagree with the statement that motorcycles are noisy," he said. "In reality, they are not. Production motorcycles are among the quietest vehicles on the road, but a very few, modified loud machines are the ones people notice."

"Buses are dirty. You have the same problem in this industry. The public notices vehicles which belch fumes, and the image of the bus is a dirty one. There is only so much you can achieve by pointing out the facts. Eventually, you still come back to this image problem."

He said the best 40 per cent of cars on the road produced the same emissions as the worst one per cent: "And I'm sure it's the same story in the bus industry. We would like to see legislation to target the gross polluters. A small, irresponsible minority are doing your case no good at all."

He warned that the Government's interest in road pricing may have disastrous consequences for the environment, driving businesses away from priced areas, and encouraging ever longer journeys by car around them: "It is premature of the Secretary of State to say such controls are inevitable. We need to look deeper into the consequences of such actions," he said.

CBW





“ The Directors of Expo Management Ltd; John Allen, Brian Chapman, Neil Millington, Rob Orchard, Alan Read, John Wellard and Mike Whitehead would like to thank the following for helping to make the recent Exhibition at Castle Donington such a success. ”

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....and not forgetting the 3000+ visitors who came to the Show!  
We look forward to seeing you all again at Expocoach 94



# Maastricht - battleground of the biggest and lowest

ALTHOUGH such fighting talk would appal the gentlemanly Europeans, this year's Autobus RAI show at Maastricht was the battleground of a competitive war that looks set to occupy continental makers for the next few years.

It's a war that is being fought on two issues. One is for the lowest, or rather the flattest, floor on a single-deck city bus and the other is for the biggest luxury touring coach. Gleaming, stylish, beautifully built and expensive versions of both dominated Maastricht.

Low-floor buses have been running in European cities for several years now and, with London Transport about to place its very public order for 68 variants, they look set to finally make inroads into the UK. Every major manufacturer except Volvo now makes a low-floor bus and most were on show in Maastricht.

What adds fuel to the competitive situation is the arguments over what exactly is a low-floor bus. This boils down to a question of definitions - not of lowness, but of flatness. Van Hool claims it has the only true low and flat-floor bus - so does United Bus subsidiary, DAB Silkeborg, and Neoplan.

They all have a claim to the distinction, because they all make buses with floors that are not only low - and that is generally taken to be 320mm or less - but also completely flat from the front door to the rear bulkhead.

Van Hool's A300 manages it through an ingenious design that involves mounting the MAN engine vertically in the middle of the bus and driving the rear wheels through an offset differential.

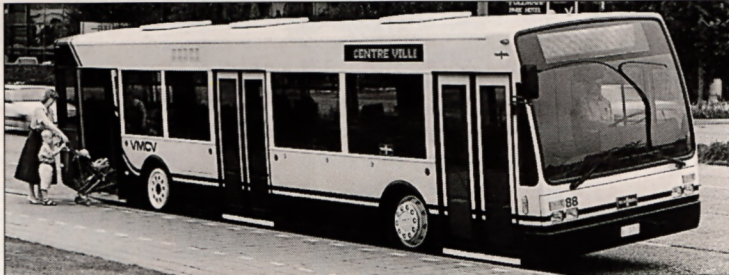
DAB's 8.6-metre Service Bus utilises an innovative hydrostatic drive to achieve a completely flat floor of just 230mm. Neoplan threw the rule book away completely when it built its integral,

**Today Europe, tomorrow the UK. Mark Barton examines the challenges facing continental coach and bus builders**



**Left: Coaching Euro style - Berkhof's 18-metre Excellence 2000 HDA competes with Van Hool equivalent and Neoplan's rigid 15-metre Megaliner**

**Right: Van Hool's truly low and flat floor A300 competes with compromise designs from Dennis and Scania**



carbon fibre bodied Metroliner with a flat floor.

All three vehicles are masterpieces of design. But they carry a price tag to match. Neoplan says the Metroliner costs up to DM 500,000. At current exchange rates that's over £205,000.

Van Hool sales director, Willy Pouliart, was less exact, but more telling. He said he didn't dare to calculate the A300's price after the pound went into free fall.

With bus sales falling in all continental countries, except Germany, those sort of costs are in danger of becoming a real barrier to sales in mainland Europe. In the UK they are totally unrealistic. In the face of such market conditions, the so-called compromise low-floor bus has come to the fore.

This new term essentially describes a low-floor bus that has a front step height of 320 mm or less, but only maintains that height up to the rear axle. From there to the back of the bus, there is either a step or a ramp, depending on the par-

ticular model. Ramps have the edge on passenger appeal.

Berkhof and Den Ouden had two of the better looking examples in Maastricht - on MAN and DAF chassis respectively. Neoplan's N4014 uses MAN or Mercedes power driving through an offset differential from the rear-mounted engine to the drive axle to achieve an almost flat floor.

But these vehicles are still not cheap. All of them are around £130,000.

Down a step from them, at least in technological terms, are the offerings from Scania and Dennis. Both have redesigned existing chassis - the N113 and Lance - to get low and flat floors in the front saloon only. From there to the rear saloon is a pronounced step.

Although a compromise, these vehicles are more affordable than their more complex competitors and, therefore, more likely to find buyers in this country - London Transport included.

Price leader is Dennis. Its Super Low Floor (SLF) Lance, the only British-built chassis available, should

come within spitting distance of the crucial £100,000 mark when bodied.

Never ones to over complicate a design, the men from Guildford argue that a low and flat floor up to the rear axle is all that is needed in real life operating conditions. That is a strong argument in itself.

When coupled to a relatively low price tag, it becomes compelling - particularly for the UK.

A killing combination of red tape and high cost makes it unlikely that the latest trend in European coaches will ever catch on here.

But mega deckers were the undisputed coaching stars of a fascinating Maastricht show and the examples on show neatly illustrated the different approaches adopted by manufacturers to high profile, high capacity and high quality shuttle coaches.

Despite being a full 15-metres long and with four axles and 87 seats, Neoplan's Megaliner is non-articulated.

It manages to turn in a comparable circle to con-

ventional coaches by a steering system that allows all four axles to steer under 30mph. Power is provided by a monster 500 bhp Mercedes engine.

Van Hool and Berkhof achieve similar manoeuvrability in 18-metre vehicles by articulation. Berkhof's articulated Excellence 2000 HDA in Maastricht had 80 Royal Class seats - a Dutch classification that specifies a one-metre gap between seats and which is charged at a premium to the passenger - and four economy class.

An alternative layout is 114 economy-class seats. Power was from a 400 bhp Scania engine driving through an easy shift gearbox.

Some 422 bhp of MAN diesel powers Van Hool's four-axled, articulated TG 822. In show trim, its 18-metre body carried just 56 Royal Class seats. Aproportionate steering, which enhances manoeuvrability, is fitted as standard.

Even Neoplan seems unsure about the legality of its rigid vehicle. Although aimed primarily at Scandinavian and Arab countries, the company claims its Megaliner is legal "in some areas in Germany" and that one was already in regular line service to Paris.

Its show vehicle had been bought by a Dutch operator, Cebo of Nieuwleusen. The Megaliner can't currently be operated in that country, but the law is expected to be changed in the next few weeks.

After strong lobbying from itself and its customers, Neoplan is expecting similar changes in law in other continental countries. If only it was that simple over here. As it is, with our current outmoded and illogical axle weight laws, most of the conventional coaches on show at Maastricht could not be operated legally in the UK - even if we could afford them.

CBW



THE appointment of Brigadier Betts as Scottish traffic commissioner may well induce the usual mutterings from the industry of the "what does he know about transport" variety - liberally spiced with the suggestion that these appointments are about who, rather than what, you know. But not from me.

Those who read the right newspapers will have seen this position advertised, at a salary of £41,120 (under review). Even without the review it is a princely 70 per cent increase on the £24,000 which this post commanded in May 1985. It undoubtedly drew a lot of applicants from all walks of life.

I am able to reveal that six candidates were short-listed. To avoid prejudicing their subsequent careers, my lips are sealed as to their actual identities, but I am able to reveal that only Brigadier Betts had a military background.

The two Scottish applicants were a solicitor and a public transport adviser. The other interviewees were English: one is at present a deputy traffic commissioner, one an executive with a professional institute which has connections with road transport,

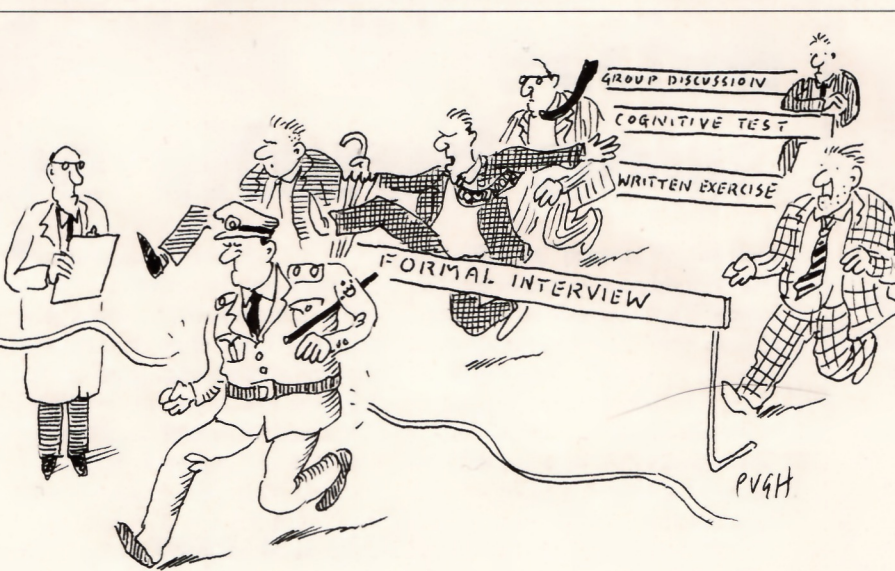
**A wider cross-section of people, all of whom clearly had many of the necessary attributes essential to be a traffic commissioner, is hard to imagine**

and one with practical operating experience.

A wider cross-section of people, all of whom clearly had many of the necessary attributes essential to be a traffic commissioner, is hard to imagine. Even so, it might still be possible to conclude that the interview was just a charade, and that the appointee had been predetermined.

But this would be an unjustified opinion which belied the facts, because I use the word interview in a very loose sense. What these six candidates faced, one rainy day in an Edinburgh hotel, was a very thorough selection process rather than a simple.

The gang of six had been only



## Right man for the job

advised that their day would involve a group discussion/exercise, an individual cognitive test, a written exercise and formal interview. They found that the master of ceremonies for the day was, in fact, a young industrial psychologist who was possibly scoring their inter-personal skills even as these six strangers to each other, yet contenders for the post, met together for coffee before the real work began.

A written exercise tested the candidates' grasp of the job. Each had a file containing an operator licence application, complete with all relevant correspondence and the report of the vehicle inspectorate on the applicant's premises, facilities and vehicles.

The exercise was to write a letter of decision based on the facts, applying the relevant law, and giving reasons for that decision.

A very interesting, but also highly revealing, group exercise followed. In this the six aspiring commissioners were asked to imagine themselves as a planning committee. They were given full details of a planning application in which there were conflicts of interest on both environmental and economic matters at personal, local and national levels.

After about 10 minutes individual contemplation of the facts of the matter they collectively played out before the selection board how they, as members of this theoretical planning committee, would

have debated this application.

Much of the discussion of the select band centred around the effects on people of the environmental aspects of development. As a member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Brigadier Betts also sported a brief for our feathered friends.

By far the most gruelling part of the day was that American invention: the psychometric test. Expressed in simple and brief terms, the concept is that, if candidates are asked (either verbally or in writing) for their reaction to a range of propositions over a limited timescale, their answers will reveal not only their aptitude for reasoning correctly under pressure and thus to form accurate immediate impressions of what they see and hear, but also character weaknesses, personal biases and dogmatic beliefs.

It was a written version of this particular form of analytical self expression in which these six competitors engaged - to answer some 74 questions in just 40 minutes.

These 'questions' took the form of propositions which the contenders were told to accept as facts (even though some of them were hard to swallow and thus left scope for personal beliefs and prejudices to over-ride the stated facts).

The task was to indicate the truth, or evidential value, of assertions made in response to the proposition. For example, the

propositions might be: Members of minority parties are militants; militants come from the less advantaged sections of society.

Flowing from these propositions the aspiring commissioners had to answer 'True' or 'False' - in seconds - to related assertions like, 'All militants are members of minority parties'. Or: 'All members of minority parties come from the less advantaged sections of society'.

tions of society'.

In another group of propositions candidates had to decide on the evidential weight of assertions stemming from propositions like: 'A manufacturer sells 50 PSVs a month. Sixty per cent of all PSVs sold are buses and 40 per cent coaches'. Are the following: True, Probably True, Probably False, False, or Insufficient Data to Determine;

(1) 'Thirty of the manufacturer's monthly output will be buses'.

(2) 'For this manufacturer to achieve the national average he needs to sell 20 coaches a month'.

After this brain-stretching, the panel interview was, perhaps beguilingly, relaxing. It took place before two senior persons from the Department of Transport, one from the Recruitment and Selection

**I am totally and utterly convinced that this very demanding, day-long, process, did, in fact, select the person from among the six who was best suited for the job**

Agency (once known as the Civil Service Commission), and one from the Scottish Office.

I am totally and utterly convinced this very demanding, day-long, process, did, in fact, select the person from among the six who was best suited to be the Scottish Traffic Commissioner.

Brigadier Betts therefore has my commendation for this important position in our industry. He deserves the fullest support of, and acceptance by, Scottish operators.

And if anyone wonders how I am able to justify this opinion, it is because I was the unsuccessful candidate whose background is one of practical operation.





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# EC circulation Directive should be altered now

From John R Fallon

SIR

In support of Roger Dixon's letter, "How much longer must the UK come off second best?" (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 24), I agree that the EC Directive 85/3, which allows free circulation of vehicles between member states, should be altered. This regulation presently limits not only maximum vehicle length to 12 metres but maximum height to four metres.

Under these regulations, it is quite absurd that Germany has legalised the operation of the 15-metre Neoplan Megaliner, while here in the UK, the home of the double decker, we are expected to comply with the same regulations and build much lower to the maxi-

mum four-metre height.

It is acknowledged that, in many places, both in mainland Europe as well as in the UK, buses built to maximum dimensions will not fit certain roads, but surely it is a matter of 'horses for courses'.

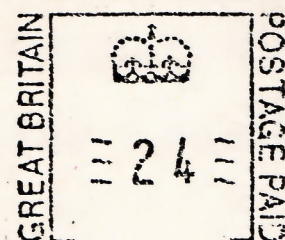
Earlier this year, I took a 'preserved' Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean (4.35 metres high) to a transport rally in Czechoslovakia, travelling on a mixture of motorway, rural and city roads across France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany. While over-bridges and tram wires are slightly lower than in the UK, it is a fallacy that full-height double-deck buses cannot be operated in certain areas of mainland Europe.

What is left of the British bus manufacturing industry should be given a fighting chance of export-

ing efficient, proven, double-deck designs to our EC neighbours. Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Greece also operate British built double deckers and should not be legislated against buying more.

EC Directive 85/3, if altered to accommodate 15-metre long coaches, should also permit a 4.5-metre height limit throughout member states and I am confident that the authorities responsible for signposting overhead obstacles lower than 4.5 metres will find that the number of new signs will be a lot fewer than expected.

John R Fallon  
Schedules officer  
Lothian Region Transport plc  
14 Queen Street  
Edinburgh  
EH2 1JL



Write to: The Editor,  
*Coach and Bus Week*,  
EMAP Response  
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or fax to: 0733 62656

The editor is always pleased to receive letters for publication in *Coach and Bus Week* and will, if requested, publish these anonymously. But please attach your name and address for our own information.

# Verbal statements danger

From John Slatcher

SIR

I wish to correct one or two minor false impressions that were - inadvertently I am sure - created by your report of the Feltham Magistrates Court case against Shearings (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 24). Both the prosecutor and our representative actually told the court in some detail that a toilet coach was not allocated to any of the departures on that particular tour although it was accepted that the booking screen showed a configuration which indicated that a toilet vehicle would be used.

David Price also explained in some detail that it was unlikely that an experienced tele-sales clerk would take that indication seriously enough to give an absolute guarantee - particularly since such a facility was not promised in the brochure, which was the crucial point.

The company decided to plead guilty, however, because the wording of the charge was "making a verbal statement" that there would be a toilet and - after the passage of several months - it would be virtually impossible to disprove that such a statement was made.

Notwithstanding these observations on the article, however, I applaud your decision to report the case because, in my view, it opens up a very serious threat to all coach operators.

Up to now, we had all assumed that we could commit offences under the Trade Descriptions Act only if we made false statements in our brochures or other literature. We were guilty only if such statements turned out to be false in the delivery of the product.

Now it seems, Trading Standards Officers

will follow up complaints from clients who have been told things on the telephone by any member of staff. It remains to be seen what would happen if the promise was, for example, made by a junior member of a travel agent's staff without reference to the tour operator - something we have all experienced from time to time.

There can only be one safe course of action - intense staff training to ensure that NO member of staff makes a promise which is not clearly stated in the brochure or the appropriate holiday literature.

Sadly, as with the application of many laws designed to protect the customer, this may well result in a worse service to our clients. We shall naturally be wary of trying to help them with additional information in advance of their holidays.

What, for example, will happen to the Shearings Disabled Help Desk which tries very hard to identify and describe those of our holidays which are more suitable to particular disabled clients? Dare we risk making recommendations when we could be taken to court if exactly what our staff member said is not available in precisely that form?

All coach operators would be advised to have a care and, I suggest, to ensure that their staff make verbatim reports of everything that is said to travel agents or potential clients.

One day, you may have to stand up in court and defend it!

John Slatcher  
Managing director  
Shearings Holidays Ltd  
Wigan

# County supportive

From Thomas Knowles

SIR

I refer to your item "Fares Tumble as Lancaster Operators Fight Slump" (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 17, 1992). My quote concerning the county council suggests that the county had failed to co-operate with the bus operators over this issue, but this is not wholly true and my comment was made in the light that, with the company using stored fares on its electronic ticket machine system, the variations in fares on different types of contract had complicated the issue from a programming point of view.

The county council did come into line with adult fares on minimum subsidy tenders, but then wished for children's fares to be related to them rather than in line with our commercial children's fares, thus creating one variation, while on certain minimum cost tenders, which generally were for the carriage of school children only, the county wished to retain existing fares. Although this latter action did not greatly affect the network, it did make it very difficult to programme our Timtronics.

Generally Lancashire must be recognised as one of the most supportive counties towards public transport. Unfortunately, the aforementioned variations did lead to programming difficulties which then caused a certain amount of confusion with the travelling public on account of the widely differing fares that existed in the first few days between Ribble, LCT and certain county contracts.

Thomas Knowles  
Managing director  
Lancaster City Transport



## Anyone want an MoD bus fleet?

IT'S NOT unreasonable to suppose that, in supplying thousands of soldiers with kit, the occasional DPM jacket or pair of boots might go missing from Forces stores.

It may come as a shock to many cost-conscious, National Insurance-paying coach operators that the grip of fiscal control in the Army is rather slacker than this. Reporting its findings, the National Audit Office discovered that a person or persons unknown in the MoD bought an entire fleet of buses without telling anyone why.

One can imagine the scene at the quartermaster's stores when the error was discovered.

"Right you 'orrible little man. What's this coach and 56 minibuses doin' clutterin' up the dexion shelving?"

"Dunno sir. They just arrived."

"But why are they parked between the shelves in the store-room?"

"I put them between 'Biscuits, dry, for cheese' and 'Coffee, instant, sachets, mess for the use of sir. Is that right? Or, as Vehicles, should they have been..."

## Racing off to tour of circuit

P & O European put two tour operators in the driving seat during Expocoach at Donington.

Manfred Thelen of Albatross Tours and Ros Honeywill of Wyvern School Tours both came out of the draw bag and won a Jim Russell School of Racing package. Anyone who has done this kind of thing will feel a sense of pity.

These race track days entail ordinary mortals in brown



Ros and Manfred: chequered prize

trousers being terrified by gifted instructors for a few hours. It is only after a couple of circuits that you realise that, no matter how good a driver you thought you were, you are actually very average, and should be considering chopping in the XR3i for a Fiesta Popular.

## Should we clean up the Mrs Mopp image?

WE have some sympathy for the BCC (no, this one's the British Cleaning Council) who want the image of cleaners to be dusted up somewhat.

The new chairman Hazel Woodbridge wants a ban on cartoons depicting cleaners as Mrs Mopp figures with scarved heads and a bucket

and mop: "It is an image we should all endeavour to change, and change quickly," she said.

"Whenever the media refer to cleaners, whether in words or pictures, this inevitably is still the image they come up with."

Unfortunately, we seem to remember our mum's cleaner wearing a scarf and carrying a

mop and bucket. Then there was that advert for a floor cleaning detergent. Then there's the women who clean our office, who have no scarves but still have the bucket and dusters.

And quite frankly, this writer fully expects cleaners to keep the dust out of their hair and to carry the tools of their trade.

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# Meeting the challenge

## Andrew Jarosz talks to the new Bus & Coach Council President, Bill Cottham, to discover his agenda for action

**Y**ORKSHIRE Rider's managing director Bill Cottham sees his next 14 months as President of the Bus & Coach Council as an opportunity to bring in fresh thinking on both the structure and activity of the association.

Last week at the BCC conference he touched briefly on the nature of changes that will be up for debate but much is still to be finalised by relevant BCC committees and therefore many of the views expressed here are his own and not necessarily policy of the BCC.

"My twin objectives are firstly to revise the structure of the BCC as it now stands, broadening the membership by inviting new groups to join and secondly to develop the thrust of the Buses Mean Business campaign, which was so successful in altering the Government's attitude," he said.

"Firstly BCC itself. The bus and coach industry has changed dramatically over the last 20 years and certainly since deregulation. BCC has tried to evolve during the transition and my belief is that we now need to develop both its structure and its membership base.

"We were a nicely regulated cosy industry but now we're commercial. Ownership has changed with NBC and SBG being privatised, LRT has come on stream and, with over 40 systems planned for the UK, I have no doubt that light rail will become a more important mode for public transport in the coming years.

"There has also been an increased realisation that the role of local authorities is a very important one, either as promoters of transport or procurers of services, as well as highway and planning authorities.

"We need an improved dialogue with LAs, better working relationships at national level between BCC and associations like the AMA and the ADC, and locally we need mechanisms for better communications between operators and LAs, which need standardising across the country.

"For all these reasons, I believe the actual

internal structure of BCC has to be radically developed. The present A,B and C membership structure was designed to be transitional and it is time to change. Now we have substantial groupings and former municipal operators which are employee-owned, so our membership structure must reflect the alterations.

The BCC has an action committee discussing proposed changes, and hopes to have a consultation document out to the membership very soon. Restructuring the levels of membership will depend on the direction to which members want the association to move.

"For specific proposals, I believe that the present membership needs dividing into a bus sector and a coach sector, representing these two separate interests," he said.

"There should be a fixed track sector. Metros, supertrams and underground railways should be included in BCC. It's nonsense that the Tyne & Wear Metro - a major and highly efficient provider of local transport - should not have a voice within a major association.

"Fourthly we need another - a non-operator sector - for groups involved in determining

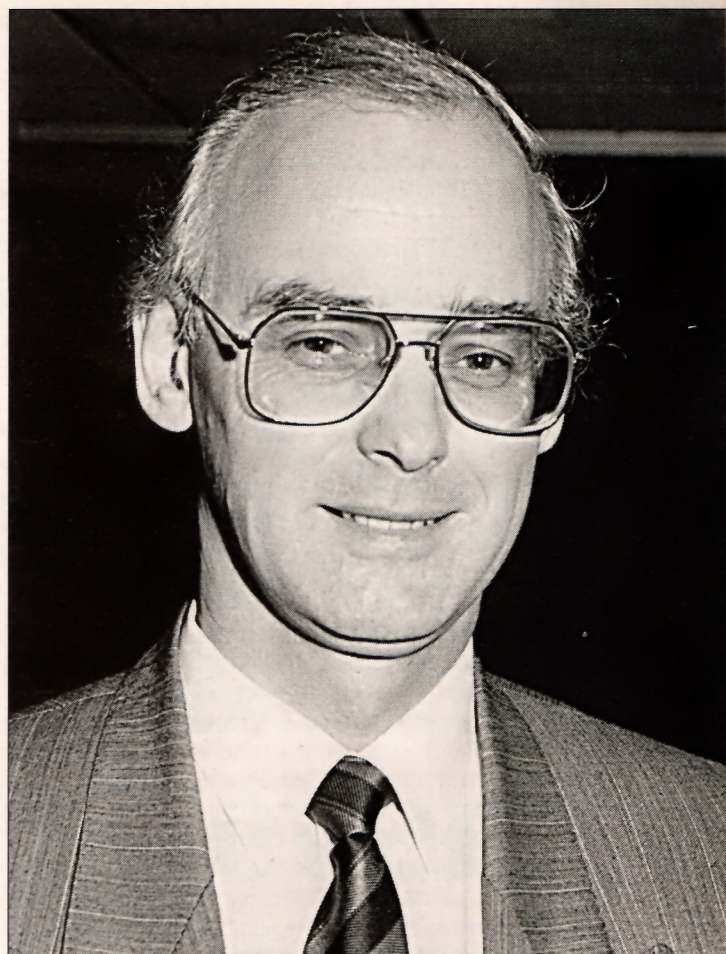
**'It is my strong belief that good public transport is the life blood of the urban area. You need look no further than Europe where it is now clearly recognised that good public transport is an essential ingredient in the prosperity of towns and cities'**

services like tendering authorities, PTEs and shire counties, with seats on the council and full voting rights."

Mr Cottham believes that there is a strong consensus, although it's natural to expect some different views. "My vision is to develop BCC into a powerful single multi-modal public transport association which speaks for all local public transport."

Changes are also proposed for Parliamentary, European and regional activity. "My view is that the local dimension is as important as the national dimension. I do accept that lobbying at national and European level is very important, with the growing importance of the European Commission.

"The EC proposal of VAT on inter-community travel is causing a great deal of concern, there is also the fear that VAT will be levied



An opportunity to bring fresh thinking

on domestic bus fares.

"Legislation emanating from the EC is becoming more and more important and I also believe that BCC needs to recognise that, and set up mechanisms within it for responding effectively.

"For example, one of the things that is needed is a powerful Parliamentary Committee within BCC. The Parliamentary dimension at national and European level has got to be strengthened.

"At local level, there is a very strong view that the present regional structure doesn't work. As an experiment in the north west, a revised form of organisation with a different secretariat and administrative backup is being tried to see whether what is discovered there can be applied to the rest of the country.

"Size of region and its boundaries is yet another question. Some people question the need for a local dimension, but I don't agree.

"I would hope that I can explain the rationale of current thinking and during the year go a long way towards getting changes implemented. I don't underestimate the challenge of the task but believe fervently in this vision of the expanded role of a much more powerful association.

"The second objective is a development of the Buses Mean Business campaign, with the aim of commissioning a keystone research project to measure the contribution made by public transport to the prosperity of the local economy.

"It is my strong belief that good public transport is the life blood of the urban area. You need look no further than Europe where it is now clearly recognised that good public transport is an essential ingredient in the prosperity of towns and cities.

"The best outcome would be to get results ➡



from the pilot studies which have application in many different areas. We could then evolve a mathematical model which is applicable in other urban areas to which we can plug in different numbers and establish the contribution to be made. Certainly this would be valuable in persuading the Government to allocate more capital money."

Mr Cottham also outlined other aspects of current Government policy that needed improvement, particularly on aspects of competition and vehicle replacement.

"I was one of the prophets of doom before deregulation but there are more benefits than I expected, with strengths outweighing weaknesses. The market-led nature of public transport is preferable, costs are lower, the industry is more efficient, we are more productive, and more responsive to passenger needs. We should retain the benefits of a market-led industry, where competition does incentivise operators, but eliminate the fragmentation.

"The application of competition policy generally needs reviewing and a BCC working party is producing a document. The registration process also needs looking at, as information required is cumbersome and unnecessary, and commissioners have discretion in cases where grants should be automatic.

"The PSV O-licence needs strengthening, with the assessment of financial standing

being much more rigorous. Operators should be required to submit regular financial statements to traffic commissioners to show their financial standing. I think there is also a case for performance bonds to be submitted and, if operations fell below what was regarded as an acceptable level or quality standard, the bond could be forfeited. Withdrawal of fuel duty rebate is a blunt instrument, 20 per cent or nothing, and very rarely used against a

**'I don't underestimate the  
...challenge of the task but  
believe fervently in this vision  
of the expanded role of a  
much more powerful  
association'**

large operator. There is a case for that being graduated. Anything the industry can do to improve safety and operational standards can only be right.

"There is a case for establishing at local level operator/authority working groups which are multi-disciplinary and look at need, justification for bus priorities, improved passenger information, bus station infrastructure, facilities etc.

"We need to develop mechanisms which improve working relationships and communications because we have a degree of instabil-

ity which is bad for our customers."

BCC is concerned over the number of new vehicle orders. As profit margins are very tight and operators have found it difficult to invest, BCC believes that there is a strong case for Government assistance to operators in the purchase of new vehicles, either by increasing allowances from 25 to 100 per cent, or for the Government to provide capital grants where operators buy vehicles of an agreed specification: DiPTAC, low-floor, low-emission engines, factors which have a strong environmental contribution.

"The industry doesn't want a new bus grant type of arrangement, which outgrew its usefulness, or operating subsidies, but there is a very strong case for capital grants for new vehicles, which was supported by a House of Commons select committee.

"The EC has produced a green paper, Transport and the Environment, which recommends that member states should provide fiscal incentives to operators who provide public transport which is clearly seen to benefit the environment. So this would be entirely consistent with EC policy."

These main points form the bulk of Bill Cottham's agenda for the next year. To his credit, he has already been nursing through some of the ideas at committees which he has been chairing, but the acid test will come soon when the whole BCC membership is consulted.

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Two of Independent Coachways' five Volvos. On the side of the leading coach is lettering celebrating the company's 25 years of coaching



# Independent as ever

**L**AST week, one of the oldest coach operators in Leeds, Independent Coachways, cel-

ebrated its silver jubilee. Located in the leafy suburb of Horsforth, the operation has stayed at a modest size in spite of the rapid expansion of many of its neighbours, but there has been no shortage of interest in a company which pioneered modern coach refurbishment and whose name has always been synonymous with quality in the eyes of its passengers and fellow operators.

The founding of Independent on October 28 1967 resulted directly from the closure of the Samuel Ledgard empire two weeks earlier. Tony Edwards, assistant traffic manager at the Armley headquarters of the well known independent, decided to set up a coach company to continue private hire work with established Ledgard customers.

A partnership with Tony Jewson and Eric

**A major expansion came in the mid seventies through the acquisition of contracts from West Yorkshire PTE which subcontracted schools and baths journeys**

Waller established the company, although it did not have any coaches of its own. Vehicles were hired from near and far, with Murgatroyd at Thruscross being singled out for particular praise.

At this time Barry Rennison, currently the general manager at Horsforth and a one-time Ledgard employee, worked for the company as a part-time driver. Barry joined the full-time staff during 1977 and led the company through its most difficult times in the 1980s during Tony Edwards' illness and death in 1987, and the subsequent sale to Thornes of Bubwith later that year.

## Leeds operator Independent Coachways has just celebrated its silver jubilee. Andrew Jarosz reports

Independent's first coach came in March 1968 and, not surprisingly, it was a former Ledgard AEC Reliance with Burlingham Seagull coachwork.

Fleet growth was slow as the vehicles had no permanent base although, by 1969, room was found at the local filling station, a stone's



Barry Rennison led the company through its most difficult times

throw from the present premises at New Road Side in Horsforth, which were acquired in 1974 when fleet strength stood at four.

A major expansion came in the mid seventies through the acquisition of contracts from West Yorkshire PTE which subcontracted schools and baths journeys that proved uneconomic for its own buses. That period also saw the beginnings of the supermarket free buses which form the backbone of today's contract work.

Independent bought its first decker in 1975 and this was followed by a succession of 15, three of which were Ailsas from Tyne and Wear PTE. These were bought in 1979 when only four years old, and kept in service until 1985. The familiar green and black livery was adopted after a Bedford VAL was purchased from Robinson of Great Harwood.

The 1970s also witnessed an ambitious chassis rebuilding exercise when seven second-hand Leyland Leopards were purchased

**Independent bought its first decker in 1975 and this was followed by a succession of 15, three of which were Ailsas from Tyne and Wear PTE which were bought in 1979**

and stripped down. All moving parts were rebuilt or reconditioned in the company's own workshop and the virtually new chassis with Leyland 680 engines rebodied by Plaxton with the latest coachwork.

The first coach, finished in April 1974, took six months to refurbish and was worked on, in the open, at the filling station yard. The last, completed in April 1981, was known as the 'Leyland Mongrel' because it was built up from two secondhand Leopards and powered by a vertical turbo-charged rear engine.

Sporting a Plaxton Supreme IV body this coach could well have been a forerunner of





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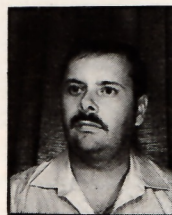
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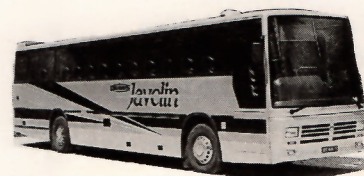


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the Royal Tiger, but the rebuilding programme came to an end as policy swung towards Volvo as the standard coach chassis.

Fleet strength grew to a peak of 16 in the early eighties, but was always constrained by the cramped nature of the site, tucked behind the Wineways shop on the main road. How the company managed to cope with a brief interlude into haulage heaven only knows but between 1977 and 1980, four Volvo artics were regularly squeezed in with the buses and coaches. The episode underlines Barry Rennison's assertion that the operation of trucks and buses does not mix well!

The early eighties saw the gradual run down of the double-deck fleet and its replacement by a new breed of bus - the Bristol RE. The first came in 1983 and has since been joined by seven others in service, all well into their first 10 years after being pensioned off by the National Bus Company.

With the last double decker departing in 1988, the REs are the backbone of the contract fleet and six are out on all-day duty at local supermarkets while the others handle works and school contracts.

The oldest is nearing its twenty-second birthday but the buses continue to be popular with passengers and easy to maintain, with the company engineers rebuilding and

**Independent's five-strong coach fleet, consists of second-hand Volvo B10Ms are not getting younger. The company does not pine for the high-specification vehicles which demand high paying work**

replacing components as they wear out. the fleet always passes careful scrutiny by the Freight Transport Association examiners.

Tony Edwards went his own way in 1980 and started Edwards Coachways, but his heart remained at Independent. He returned three years later and proceeded to buy out the remaining partners to achieve sole ownership. Regrettably, events were overtaken by his long illness culminating with his death in 1987. During this period, Barry Rennison, now traffic manager, ran the company single handed and then prepared it for sale.

Three operators emerged as serious contenders in the sale, two local and one from a



The last coach to be refurbished was known as the 'Leyland Mongrel'

bit farther afield. In hindsight, the purchase by Thornes of Bubwith in 1987 was fortunate, as the others have since ceased coach operations.

Philip Thornes, who operates a similar size fleet in Humberside, is heavily committed to bus and coach operation and has left Barry to manage the company in a fairly autonomous way. There have been changes, like the adoption of Thornes' two-tone blue livery, but the emphasis has always been on quality rather than a change of direction.

Independent has shied away from registering local bus services, although nothing can be precluded in the future. The onset of deregulation and the loss of WYPTE contracts as Yorkshire Rider was formed coincided with Tony Edwards' illness and Mr Rennison did well to rebuild the company's contract base, without resorting to competition on the road.

Independent's five-strong coach fleet, consists of second-hand Volvo B10Ms are not getting younger. The company does not pine for the high-specification vehicles which demand high paying work. Nor does it chase after tour contracts or express work but concentrates on the quality end of the local private hire market.

Most of its clients are long-standing customers, groups tend to come from the mature end of the market which appreciates good quality service and doesn't mind paying for it. In return Independent offers well turned out vehicles, experienced drivers and excellent backup.

The company is fully streamlined, with computerised systems, two-way radio control, and can call on additional vehicles from the Bubwith base. Thornes' modest holiday programme is now also available from Leeds and, as the regular clientele builds up, the two companies may chose to add to the 20 British and Continental destinations.

Although Independent has certainly come of age, it cannot be described as staid and boring. Yorkshire folk are notoriously

**Although the company is not one of the industry's risk takers, it still has its moments, like earlier this year when coaches from throughout the region were mustered to transfer incoming air passengers**

careful with their money, and Independent turns in a creditable profit on its £500,000 plus turnover. Although the company is not one of the industry's risk takers, it still has its moments, like earlier this year when coaches from throughout the region were mustered to transfer incoming air passengers when Leeds/Bradford airport was the only one open in the north.

Its present fleet size of 13 is very much governed by its small premises and limited regular market.

Perhaps when the company finds the larger operating base it would like, we may see an expansion into new fields as the business progresses to its golden jubilee.



Left: the operator's oldest Volvo rubs shoulders with Bristol REs



Right: Eight REs form the contract fleet



# Commissioner cuts duration by a year

**YOUR WEEKLY  
REPORT ON  
LAW AND THE  
COACH AND BUS  
OPERATOR  
BY MICHAEL JEWELL**

**T**HE duration of the 18-vehicle licence held by Angel Motor Services Ltd, of Feltham, Middlesex, has been cut so as to expire next March, a year early, by the South Eastern and Metropolitan traffic commissioner Brigadier Michael Turner.

DoT vehicle examiner Dru Norris told an Eastbourne public

**The company had previously put its trust in outside contractors to undertake its maintenance, said Mr Bell. That was how the trouble arose**

inquiry that he had imposed an immediate prohibition on one of the company's vehicles and a delayed prohibition on another, when he carried out a spot check in June. There were no maintenance facilities and no maintenance staff at the company's depot at the Bedfont Trading Estate.

For the company, Robert Bell said that it was now in a settled base after three moves in as many

years. The company had been through a difficult period. Its directors had now taken it upon themselves to put their own house in order. If the vehicle examiner made a further visit, he would not find the same problems.

The company had previously put its trust in outside contractors to undertake its maintenance, said Mr Bell. That was how the trouble arose. There was no element of complacency and the directors were all too well aware of the seriousness of the situation.

He asked the commissioner not to take any action which could or would jeopardise the commercial position of the company and its 40 employees. James Horn, the company's general manager, said the majority of the problems had been caused by the frequent moves of depot, which had been forced upon it sometimes by massive increases in rent.

He agreed records had not been kept as they should have been. He blamed the drivers, who, he said, were generally good but there were one or two who did not do exactly what they were asked.

Mr Horn said he had wrongly assumed that the job was being done correctly. The company was spending thousands of pounds on tyres. Drivers were instructed not to take out any vehicle with bald tyres but to report them.

After the vehicle examiner's visit, he had written to the company's staff emphasising the importance of reporting defects. None of the mandatory inspections of

**The company had clearly broken its statements of intent to keep its vehicles in a fit and serviceable condition and to keep 15 months records of maintenance**

the vehicles had been missed, it had just been forgotten to record them fully.

Brigadier Turner said he was puzzled and disappointed with the conditions found at the depot. He was puzzled because the company had not attempted to put its house in order after the issue of a number of prohibition notices in 1990. He was disappointed because, in the period between 1981 and 1990,

when the company was in London, there had been few, if any, maintenance problems.

The spot check in June, together with the issue of prohibitions on other occasions, showed records were not being checked and the company had put five coaches on the road in a condition dangerous to the public. It therefore had to pay the penalty. The company had clearly broken its statements of intent to keep its vehicles in a fit and serviceable condition and to keep 15 months records of maintenance. Though he had noted 40 people were employed, that had played no part in his decision.

His concern was that the company's system of maintenance had fallen below the accepted standard and public safety had been jeopardised. His hope was that the new system would continue to bring about an improvement.

He would not renew the company's licence at the end of next March unless the present improvement continued.



## Appeal against reduction is lost

**N**EWQUAY-based Harris Coaches (Summercourt) Ltd has lost its appeal against the reduction in its licence authorisation from 10 to six vehicles. The cut had been made by Western traffic commissioner Air Vice Marshal Ronald Ashford, in the light of the company's maintenance record.

During the public inquiry before the commissioner, evidence was given of prohibition notices imposed on the company's vehicles. It was conceded that vehicles had not been regularly inspected.

The company appealed to the Transport Tribunal on the grounds that the commissioner's decision was too harsh.

For the company, it was said there had been a misunderstanding between its representative and the commissioner at the public inquiry in January over the number of vehi-

cles which the company wished to have authority to operate.

It was argued that it was improper or unreasonable to reduce the authorisation as a mark of censure.

Even if the commissioner had the power to reduce the number of

**Dismissing the appeal, the tribunal said that it found no merit or substance in the arguments put forward for the company**

authorised vehicles, it was unreasonable to reduce it by half.

Dismissing the appeal, the tribunal said it found no merit or substance in those arguments. The suggestion that there was a misunderstanding was unsustainable.

A letter was produced in January which unequivocally stated that the company had reduced the size of its fleet from 10 coaches to

six. That was confirmed during the inquiry.

The commissioner had a duty, when granting a licence, to attach a condition specifying the maximum number of vehicles that could be used under the licence at any one time. He had a discretion to vary any such condition if he was satisfied a statement of intention had not been fulfilled or that a prohibition notice had been imposed on one of the licence holder's vehicles.

It was abundantly clear that the requirements of the Act had been breached. The commissioner was entitled to exercise his discretion. It was not for the tribunal to interfere unless it could be shown that the commissioner had acted unlawfully or unreasonably.

He had clearly reduced the authorisation in the belief that the company was only intending to operate six vehicles in the future.

The commissioner stated that the curtailment was to mark his dis-

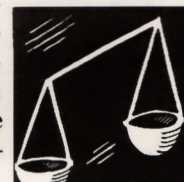
pleasure at the admitted grave lapses in the company's duty.

No acceptable reason for the lapses was to be found and the commissioner coupled the curtailment with a warning as to the future.

It had been suggested on the company's behalf that the reduction

**In the tribunal's view, the commissioner's decision was reasonable and entirely justified in the light of the company's shortcomings**

to six vehicles was only temporary. There was nothing in the evidence to support that statement. In the tribunal's view, Air Vice Marshal Ashford's decision was reasonable and entirely justified in the light of the company's shortcomings.





# Second public inquiry for Llansilin Motor Services

**M**ICHAEL Jones, trading as Llansilin Motor Services, has been allowed to continue operating with his current authorisation of six vehicles, but North Western deputy traffic commissioner Kenneth Birchall has directed that his licence terminate in a year.

DoT vehicle examiner Eric James told a Manchester public inquiry that, after a previous public inquiry at Wrexham in August 1990, he had carried out an unannounced spot check in September 1991. He examined five vehicles, imposing one delayed and four im-

**The majority of the defects related to brakes. On one vehicle he could find no evidence of any brake linings. One vehicle had a holed exhaust**

mediate prohibitions. Two of the prohibitions were subsequently varied when additional defects were found when the vehicles were produced for clearance.

The majority of the defects related to brakes. On one vehicle he could find no evidence of any brake linings. One vehicle had a holed exhaust box and the underside of the bus was badly blackened. When he sat at the rear of the bus his eyes started smarting.

In February he saw a vehicle parked at the premises of a rival operator, R E Morris & Sons, trading as Tanat Valley Coaches. He was told it was in for repair, but nobody seemed to know exactly why. He examined the vehicle, imposing a prohibition for 12 immediate and two delayed items. The vehicle was in a shocking state. It could not have deteriorated into such a deplorable condition over a four-week inspection period.

A warning letter was sent to Mr Jones and a further unannounced spot check was carried out on February 20. There were signs of improvement. Five vehicles were examined, three were given defect notices and two were free from defects.

Mr James said that he carried out a spot check in June after a complaint about a vehicle emitting

**North Western deputy traffic commissioner Kenneth Birchall has directed that the licence of Michael Jones, trading as Llansilin Motor Services, terminate in a year because of continuing maintenance problems**

excess smoke. He gave the vehicle concerned an immediate prohibition for a brake defect and an oil leak and contamination which constituted a fire risk. That prohibition was subsequently varied for a further four immediate and two delayed defects, and the vehicle had still not been cleared.

After a further complaint from a member of the public concerning a defective emergency door button, he carried out another unannounced spot check in July.

One vehicle had recently been put off the road with engine problems. That vehicle was given an immediate prohibition for two brake defects and that prohibition had still not been cleared. Three other vehicles inspected were given immediate prohibitions and a fourth a defect notice. Two of the prohibitions were subsequently varied for additional defects before eventually being cleared.

Mr Jones vehicles had been presented for annual test 26 times to achieve seven MoT certificates. Only two vehicles passed first time. The main items of failure were smoke emission, body condition, electrical wiring and equipment, brakes, steering, and headlamp alignment.

Maintenance facilities consisted of a 40-foot inspection pit in the open plus a small covered pit. There were more than adequate tools. Staff consisted of Mr Jones' son Paul, who he regarded as semi skilled, assisted by two drivers. There was no standard to the inspections and they were just 'fire fighting' defects.

Though the maintenance records showed regular inspections, said Mr James, they bore little resemblance to the condition of the vehicles. The reality was that the maintenance system was totally ineffective. In a period just short of 12 months he had found 52 prohibition items. It was the worst case he had come across of consistent inability to maintain vehicles in a roadworthy condition.

Questioned by Rena Smith, for

Mr Jones, Mr James said he did not prohibit a vehicle unless he could prove the defect 110 per cent. He thought Paul Jones was "looking and not seeing" when he inspected the vehicles.

Miss Smith said that, on all of the spot checks, at least three of the vehicles examined had been off the road for some time. The mechanic had been concentrating on the vehicles in use.

The results of the checks paint-

**It was the worst case the examiner had come across of consistent inability to maintain vehicles in a roadworthy condition**

ed a blacker picture than was really the case. The vehicle at Morris' premises had been there for some time awaiting repair. It would not have been used in that state.

Miss Smith said the accounts showed the money spent on maintenance but Mr Birchall said he did not attach too much importance to the amount of money spent. An operator could have very good vehicles that did not cost a lot to maintain.

It was possible to throw money away without getting good maintenance. Mr Jones had spent a lot of money on maintenance but unfor-

tunately that had not produced the results it should have done. It had been bad maintenance.

Michael Jones said his son had previously been classed as a skilled mechanic. He had been hoping to get some better vehicles and get rid of the rubbish.

However, additional contracts he had been hoping to acquire had not materialised and he had unfortunately had to try to hang on to the vehicles. As a consequence, in August he had voluntarily handed in licence discs for six vehicles.

He had also got rid of the small minibuses and hire cars they had been operating. He had put everything he had been told in 1990 into effect. The main problem then had been records. Some of the documents had got destroyed.

Asked what was going wrong, Mr Jones said that things did start to get better and then slipped back again. Two vehicles had recently passed their annual test first time.

Cutting the licence duration by a year, Mr Birchall said he was aware of Mr Jones' medical problems in relation to stress. However, he had to ensure at all times that vehicles being operated were in a safe, sound, roadworthy condition. If he had any doubts, he had to take action to put matters right.

He warned that, should Mr Jones be called to another public inquiry over maintenance, it was very likely the licence would be revoked.



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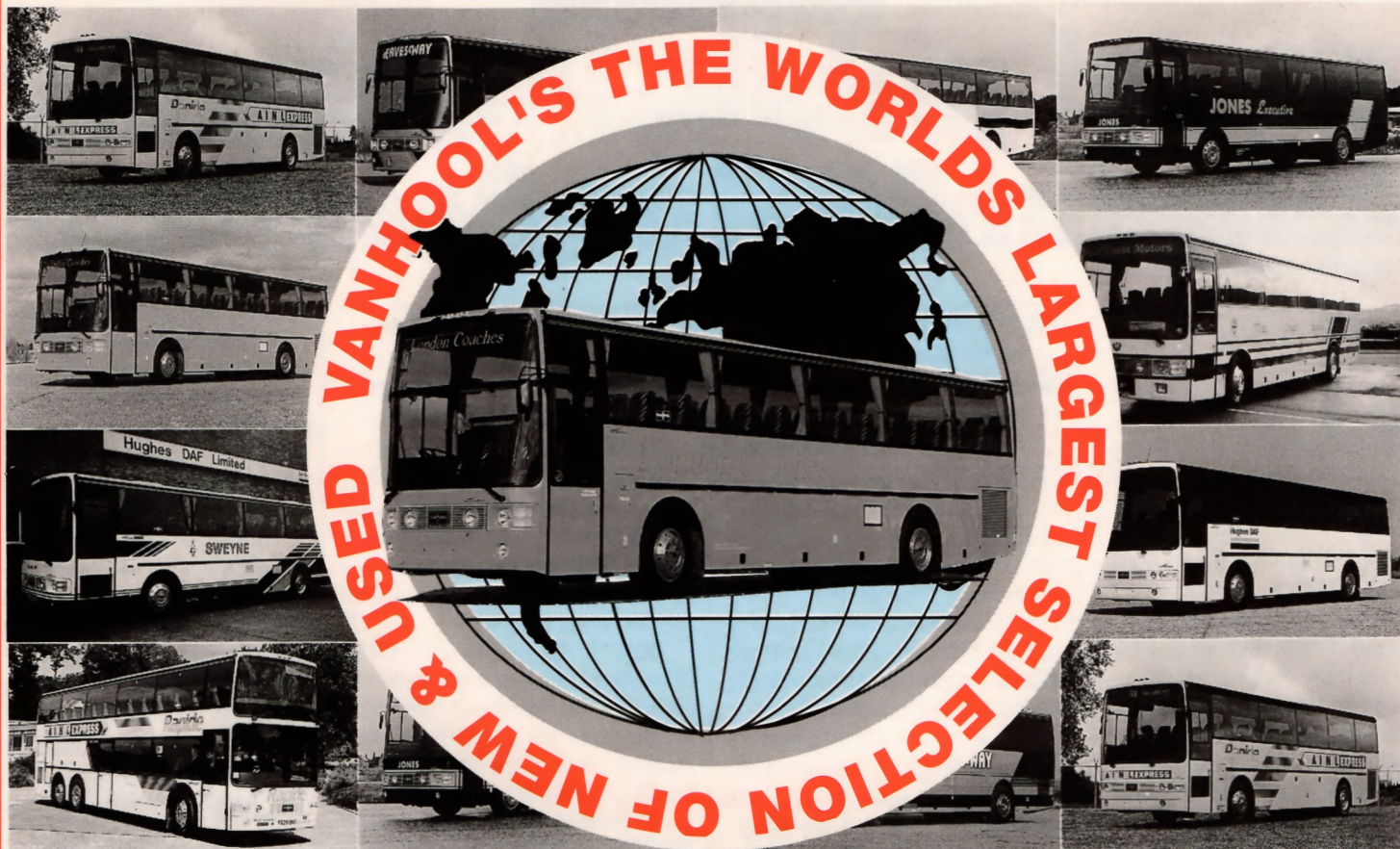
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**1987 (D) LEYLAND TIGER 260 DUPLÉ 340**. 48 recliners, rear sunken toilet, boiler, fridge, video, cont. door.

**1986 (C) DAF SB2300 DHS PLAXTON PARAMOUT 3200**. 49 recliners, sunken toilet, single glazed.

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## KFI offers smoke emission test

**A** PRE-MoT smoke emission test for £12.50 plus VAT is offered by Kingswinford Fuel Injection.

KFI carries out the test using similar equipment to that employed by the Vehicle Inspectorate, and, if the vehicle fails will indicate the probable cause of the fault.

It says the most common causes of excessive black smoke include; air starvation, boost pressure loss, exhaust pressure loss, excess exhaust back pressure, poor compression, faulty fuel injection, foreign material in the

induction or exhaust system, or a timing fault.

Excessive blue smoke can be caused by air starvation, excessive engine crankcase pressure, oil in the combustion chamber, prolonged idling, faulty turbocharger, faulty thermostat, the wrong fuel or a timing fault.

KFI warns that pre-booking of tests is essential, but it offers customers on-site testing for fleets of 10 vehicles or more within 20 miles of Kingswinford.

☎ **Contact KFI at 5 Lenches Bridge, Kingswinford, tel 0384 298666.**

## Coach operators' winter warning from Lucas

**F**UEL system specialist Lucas has warned bus and coach operators of the dangers of being completely reliant on winter diesel to provide protection against waxing in severe operating conditions during the coming cold season.

Although the prescribed cold filter plugging point is -9° C, wax starts forming at -4° C. This crystal formation restricts the fuel flow and additives can only slow the growth and not prevent the crystals from forming.

In cold conditions, fuel heaters will automatically raise the temperature of the diesel to the point where crystals are dissolved. Thermostatically-controlled, they remain fitted to the vehicle all year, but only come into operation when they are needed.

Lucas offers a range of D-Wax diesel fuel heaters which fit virtually all commercial vehicles. For agglomerator flow systems, there are models for cartridge and spin-on type filter elements, and an in-line, universal fuel heater is available for use with filter flow systems.

More details from Lucas Aftermarket Operations, Parts and Service, Great Hampton Street, Hockley, Birmingham B18 6AU.

## Range of vibration resistant fasteners

**T**HE complete range of Huck high vibration resistance industrial fasteners is covered in two new brochures - one for lighter applications up to 3/8 in (10 mm) diameter, and another for heavier duty usages up to 1 1/8 in.

Full information, including beneficial applications, advantages and variety of materials, head styles and finishes are covered.

☎ **Further details from Huck International Ltd, Unit C, Stafford Park 7, Telford, Salop TF3 3BQ, tel: 0952 290011.**



Unity Garage's award winning DAF

## Telma retarder fitted to DAF award winner

**R**ECOVERY specialist Unity Garage of Leicester has fitted a Telma retarder to its award-winning DAF 3600 Syren 6x4 heavy recovery vehicle.

Although best known in its coach and minibus applications the Telma electromagnetic retarder range has a high degree of adaptability and can be line or retrofitted to almost any vehicle.

The Unity DAF, which recently won the coveted AA/BRS Best Recovery Truck Award, has a 30-tonne crane, which can over-reach to lift a 17-tonne vehicle at 15 ft. With this sort of load, pres-

sure on the wrecker's brakes can be awesome.

For this reason, Unity has been fitting Telma retarders to its vehicles for over 16 years. John Rogers, Unity's managing director, says that for safety and economical reasons the Telma retarder is invaluable.

☎ **Contact Telma Retarder Ltd, 31 Clarke Road, Mount Farm Industrial Estate, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK1 1LG, tel: 0908 642822, or, if you have a coach which needs lifting out of a ditch, Unity Garage on 0532 766326.**

## PPG launches new filler

**R**EFINISHING product specialist PPG has launched Galvaplast 77, a premium quality multi-purpose polyester filler, which offers outstanding qualities of adhesion over all properly prepared metal substrates, including aluminium, and galvanised and other coated steels. This flexibility reduces the number of different products

needed in the bodyshop.

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☎ **Contact PPG, PO Box 359, Rotton Park Street, Ladywood, Birmingham B16 0AD, tel 021 455 9866.**

## PSV exhausts from Bainbridge

**E**XHAUST specialist Bainbridge has expanded its range of Truckmaster replacement silencers and fittings.

Its new catalogue includes for the first time components for Renault-badged commercials, and exhaust fittings for the Volvo B10 range and the DAF SB2300.

Ancillary products such as clamps, rigid and flexible tubing, pipe links and spark arresters,

together with workshop items, are listed in the first eight pages, and there are imperial/metric conversion charts for easy reference.

The catalogue is designed for use in the workshop. Each page is laminated to protect it from grime and the binder has a tough outer cover.

☎ **Contact Bainbridge Silencers Ltd, Ribchester House, Lancaster Road, Preston PR1, tel: 0772 822272.**



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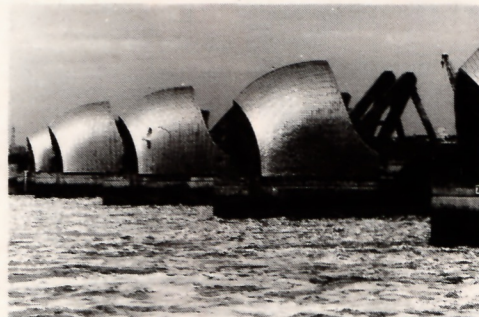
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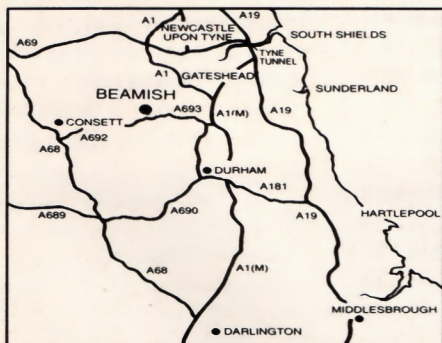
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## Survival of zoo depends on superstore site sale

**R**ECESION-HIT Paignton Zoo is appealing to coaching clients to support its application to sell part of an adjacent site to a superstore developer.

The zoo's parent trust, Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust, says the building of a supermarket on site will save the zoo from closure... and has thrown in a public access to nearby Primley Park and Wood to sweeten the pill with the locals.

"This serious situation has developed over the past three years due to the economic recession and resulting dramatic decline in attendance, leading to an operating loss and freezing of any development and improvement to the zoo," said executive director Peter Stevens.

"The combination of these factors is bad enough but, coupled with a long-standing need to upgrade our exhibits, animal accommodation and public facilities, a situation is produced which can only be cured by an injection of a considerable sum of money."

The zoo estimates the £3 million it hopes to generate with the sale will keep it afloat for many years, providing a more modern style of zoo which will further improve the public image of zoos. It says a superstore will come to the Torbay area no matter what decision the borough council makes - and if it goes elsewhere will rob local businesses of poten-



Elephants Duchess and Gay, at Paignton Zoo

tial visitors.

One of the zoo's successes in the last year has been the education programme, which has attracted 13 per cent more students to the Devon Zoology Centre. National curriculum work in geography, English, maths and art are catered for, aside from the usual science subjects.

Paignton has built its relatively low level of coach operator business this year by appointing a coach co-ordinator - former Wallace Arnold man John Rea. Discounts of 20 per cent from the standard winter rate of £3.95 (£2.25 children) are available, and special short-stay tickets for groups - useful if staying for a meal stop at the 400-seat restaurant.

**Full details of Paignton Zoo are available from John Rea, on 0803 557479, Fax 0803 523457.**

## Windsor Safari Park finally shuts down

**W**INDSOR Safari Park has closed after months of insolvency. Despite a desperate search for a buyer, liquidators eventually had to shut down the park.

Windsor Safari Park was one of the original zoos sited in open parkland - an idea first put into action at Longleat by the Chipperfield circus family. For many years it was among the most successful tourist attractions in Europe.

## You can help save the zoos

**T**HERE cannot be a business in the country which cannot understand the problems faced by Britain's zoos and wildlife parks.

Recession, downturn in turnover, reduced investment, further decline... it's a vicious spiral which has already closed many small businesses. These aren't product failures showing on the bottom line, these are medium-term cash flow problems... problems which the banks once understood but now prefer to penalise.

It's already too late for Windsor Safari Park. The spectre of insolvency still hangs over London Zoo despite the £1 million Kuwaiti injection. Now Paignton Zoo faces an uncertain future - one which hangs on selling a supermarket site this year.

In good times gone by, the coach industry and zoos profited from one another's existence. Every operator had a busy zoo excursion programme.

Public and media interest in zoos has declined but, I believe, they deserve a better deal. Never has there been greater need for captive breeding of rare species, and better education to help youngsters become more aware of the destruction of the natural world. Most zoos have improved beyond recognition in the last ten years. More imaginative zoos are on their way, but they need punters to pay for the new ideas.

If every operator were to give a little thought to adding a zoo excursion to their programme or itinerary next spring, it is just possible that interest in modern zoos could be rekindled.

At the better zoos, staff will bend over backwards to give your clients a good day out, be they school children on an education visit or OAPs out for afternoon tea. There is plenty of marketing material and support, the profit opportunity is good, and the product can be made appealing to a broad spectrum of the public.

Mark Williams



Tower Bridge - spent millions

## New exhibition next year by Tower Bridge

**T**OWER Bridge is 'going public' with its new exhibition - due to open next summer - during this month's World Travel Market.

The London attraction has spent millions on a high-tech tour which includes animatronics and state-of-the-art video presentation. Work has already begun but the finishing touches will be added over the first six months of next year, closing Tower Bridge until it re-opens on July 1.

Groups of up to 40 taking the guided tour through The Celebration Story will also be able to enjoy a period gift shop, new catering facilities and an education centre for school groups.





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## A warm reception for Blitz attraction

**J**UST five days after the doors opened, London's newest group attraction - Winston Churchill's Britain at War - was proving very popular.

While older people toured the exhibition with tears in their eyes, eager youngsters raced around reading the genuine newspaper reports on the walls to follow the story. And not every visitor is expected to be English-speaking - the information leaflet is printed in three languages.

Britain at War uses the latest technology to tell the story of the ordinary people of London. You step into the blackout - inside a department store shortly after a Blitz bomb has struck the building. You escape, but you get a taste of what it's like, and see others rescued. There is even a casualty list chalked on the wall.

**London's newest attraction and a fun musical might make the ideal nostalgia combination for this winter's excursions programme, suggests Verite Baker**

As well as being a nostalgic reminder of the War years, Britain at War offers school parties a fascinating way to learn what life was really like. For instance, a policeman blew his whistle, and then showed us how to use a gas mask, and sound an air-raid warning.

Art students could learn from the posters - mostly in black and white, and using the caption writer's art at its best: Be like Dad - Keep Mum, must be one of the most famous.

There is one horrific poster showing how to get rid of an incendiary device - guaranteed to send today's safety-conscious generation into a fit. As the lift shudders down you can hear bombs going off, until you step out into the Underground with the deluxe version of tiered bunks. One old man sits up defiantly, with his First World War Medals pinned to his chest, while Vera Lynn's voice comes over on the 'wireless'.

George Rodger's nostal-

gic photos of evacuees show the fears and hopes of children being sent in to the unknown, with their only identity a label tied around their necks.

And there is the *Daily Mail* front cover showing the classic photo of St Paul's Cathedral dome defiantly standing above bomb smoke.

War-time photos show huge wedding cakes. At the exhibition all is revealed: you could hire an impressive looking fake for 25 pence. And before you reach the inevitable shop there is an American GI's Club with authentic music blaring out and a poster showing 'Tonight's Target' - a long-legged pin-up.

■ **WIRELESS** was the vital link that kept everyone cheerful and in touch, and Radio Times at the Queen's Theatre is just the right musical to visit after Britain at War. It's tailor-made for coach groups, with a witty script, Noel Bay's tunes and an attractive chorus that can sing; with lots of old faithfuls in the score from 'Run Rabbit Run' to 'There's something about a Soldier'. It's frothy, fluffy and not too high-brow.

The show is out of the same stable as 'Me and My Girl', which has been running for years, and its backers are obviously hoping that



Radio Times is pure nostalgia

Radio Times will stake its place in the only-running faithfuls beloved of group organisers. For once the critics agreed with the audience, and gave the musical excellent reviews, so there are good quotes to put in the ads; as the *Daily Mail* says, it should 'Run, Run, Run'.

Older clients will find plenty of nostalgia as the cast puts out a variety show on the wireless at the beginning of the war. Younger guests will enjoy the precision tap-dancing and good acting from most of the cast, and the clever way the orchestra comes out of the pit and forms part of the action on stage.

● West End theatre is suffering from lack of audiences at the moment, but get in quickly for tickets, before the word gets round and it's difficult to buy. Robert James on 071 439 1439 has some good group deals going.

📞 **Britain at War** is in Southwark, with plenty of back-up sightseeing in the area, with HMS Belfast, Tower Bridge, The Clink Museum and Southwark Cathedral. Ordinary entrance is £4.75, but phone 071 403 3171 for group bookings.



Britain At War: realism for groups

## Pontins targets coach operators to boost group bookings

**H**OLIDAY Club Pontins has launched an aggressive campaign to sign up more coach operators, with commissionable group rates starting at under £140 for seven nights full board.

Pontins says many of the prices are lower than they were in '91. Stretching through the summer season at a dozen selected locations, the holidays are split into 'adults only' and family breaks. Children go at half adult rate.

A seven-night half-board break at the Middleton Tower Holiday Centre at Morecambe in late

September is £119, less 7.5 per cent per coachload and commissionable 10 per cent. The discounts and three free places bring the price down to under £13.50 a night.

Towards the top end of the price range, a full-board seven-night break at Torquay's Barton Hall Chalet Hotel with table service is £259 less 10 per cent and a free place. "We've always had a good strong base of business with coach operators but, with all the problems the industry has had this year, we need to be aggressive," said group sales manager Harold Burke. "Let's

face it, the recession isn't getting any better, and there are many more things next year to make trading difficult for operators, such as new tour laws and higher insurance."

Mr Burke said around 20 per cent of its business was with groups last year but that there was now a need to get this proportion higher, and not just in the shoulder months: "We already have a very healthy winter season, some special breaks being fully booked up to '93."

Pontins' centres range from fairly standard chalet parks to those with swimming pools and extensive

night-club facilities. Sand Bay Chalet Hotel at Weston super Mare, and South Downs Chalet Hotel in Sussex are especially suitable for the elderly and disabled.

Mr Burke said the dozen properties listed in its new Happy Times brochure were by no means all Pontins had available for groups. There are another ten locations including a site in Ireland at which groups can be booked.

📞 Full details of Pontins group rates from the Happy Times brochure, or phone Harold Burke on 0257 452452, Fax 0257 450254.



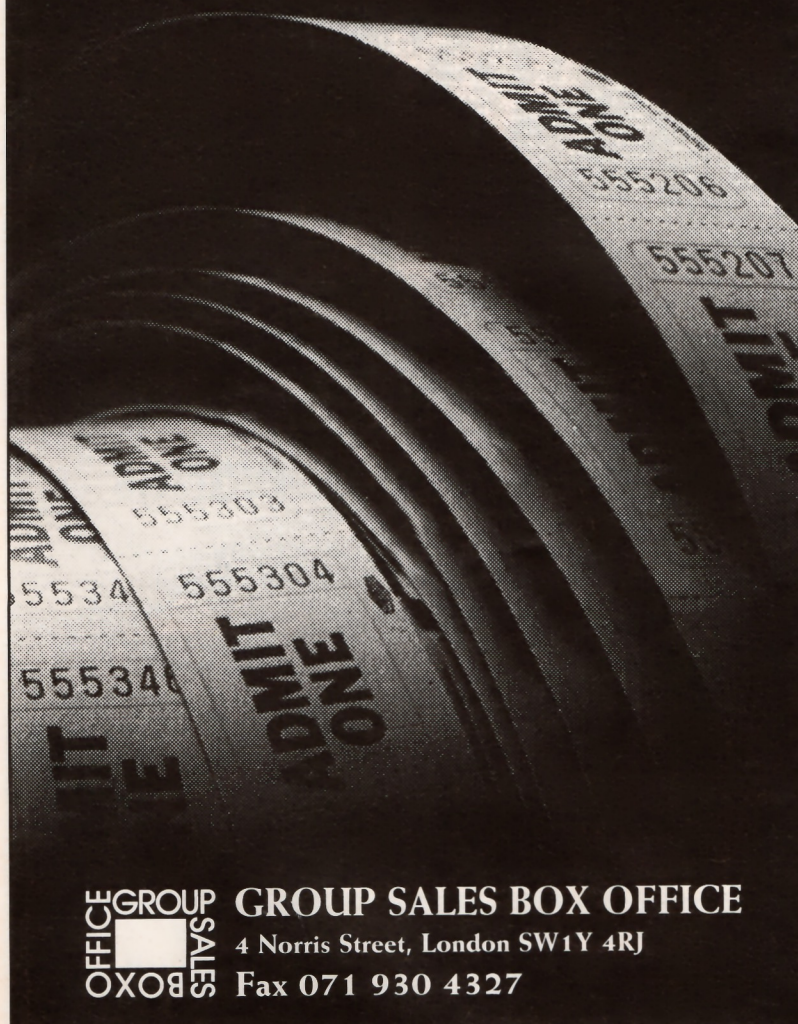
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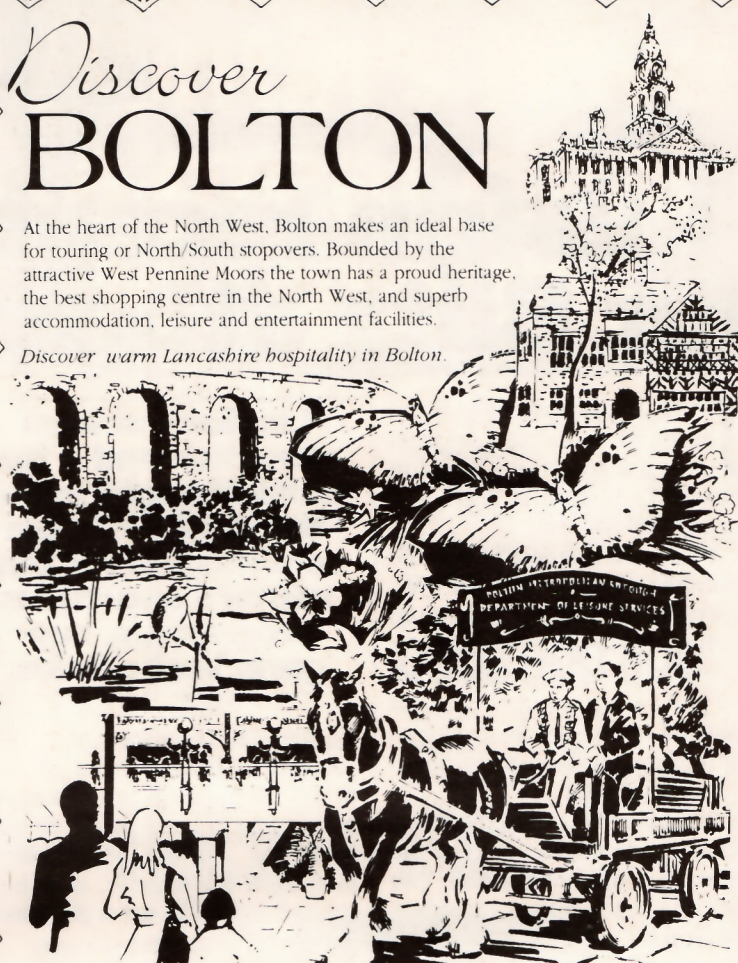


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## There is an alternative

**S**PENDING a penny at the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in Mid Wales can be an enlightening experience. For it was here that I learned through a poster on the WC door how my waste products would contribute to growing excellent begonias.

This, of course, is only one small aspect of the centre's activities, which aim to present environmental issues to the general public in a fun way. A coach group can spend an entertaining, informative and even inspirational few hours or perhaps even a day at the site, located in one of Britain's most beautiful areas.

The centre, three miles north of Machynlleth on the A487, Powys, in the hills of the forested Dulas Valley, is on the southern edge of the beautiful Snowdonia National Park and could make a day excursion from the West Midlands and the north west. From other areas it could form part of a short break or weekend trip.

Built on top of a disused slate quarry, CAT now has a computer-controlled water-powered funicular railway to carry 20 visitors at a time from the car park up the side

By Frank Forster

of the quarry to the main area in about a minute.

Just as well, as the centre is coping with about 95,000 visitors a year at present. Energy from the funicular's brakes is re-used to pump the water 'ballast' back up to the centre. The funicular makes for an impressive introduction to the seven acres of alternative technology displays.

The carriages can take wheelchairs, too, making the centre suitable for the disabled, the young and the old. Once on the site visitors can view all sorts of working exhibits, some of them interactive and fun for the kids, on anything from wind and wave power to solar energy, organic gardening, energy conservation (you can't fail to come away with at least a few energy-saving ideas for your own home) and Britain's best insulated house.

Throughout the year residential courses on wind power, organic gardening and blacksmithing are open to the public, although from November till March not all the facilities - the funicular, for example - are opera-

tional. CAT has an education department which arranges introductory talks, guided tours and hands-on workshop sessions for school groups. Since 1990 the centre has also been operating the Eco Cabins residential facility for schools and other groups.

The site has never been connected to the national grid and has generated most of its own electricity from wind, water and solar energy for 17 years to supply a live-in community of about 25 and a working one of around 40.

Wholefood meals are available in the CAT's Egon Ronay recommended vegetarian restaurant while gifts, 'green' products for the home and a wide range of books are on sale at the centre's shop. There's also an adventure playground and toddlers' play area.

Coaches should approach the centre from the south because of the narrow entrance. The coast is only a few miles away and there are quite a number of narrow-gauge railways in the area together with an RSPB nature reserve, outward bound centres and Corris' railway museum and craft centre. Powis Castle near Welshpool is not far away either.



CAT's funicular

Single prices till March 31 are: adult £2.65, concessionary £2.40, child aged five and over £1.70, family £8.75. From April 1 they are £4.20, £3.20, £2, £12.20 respectively. Booking at least a week in advance results in a 20 per cent discount for groups of 20 or more and a driver's free meal voucher and will dispense with parking problems. School groups should book well in advance. Normal group discount is 10 per cent.

**Advance booking, contact**  
**Joan Randle, The Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Powys, Mid-Wales, SY20 9AZ, tel 0654 703743, general inquiries Mike Baldwin on 0654 702400.**

## Dreamcoat wears well

**I**T NOW seems that the hit musical **Joseph**, still playing to a packed London Palladium, will continue at least until May '93. The next big Andrew Lloyd Webber musical spectacular, **Sunset Boulevard**, is rumoured to be heading for the Adelphi Theatre, where a structural survey has been carried out. If all is well, the £2.5 million musical will open in June. Contenders for the lead role are still Meryl Streep and Patti Lupone. It will be directed by Trevor Nunn, whose past successes include **Cats** and **Starlight Express**.

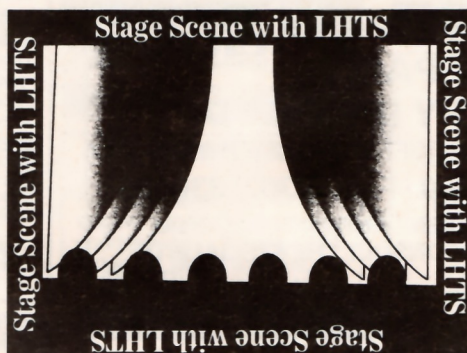
Watch out for **Grease**, which is planned for next autumn. The millionaire impresario Robert Stigwood hopes to bring the £1.5 million show to the West End with at least two big names.

**Kiss of the Spider Woman**, hailed the most original musical since **Miss Saigon**, seems set for a good run at the Shaftes-

bury after opening to good reviews. And Tony Slattery has become a big box office hit with **Radio Times** (see feature on page 35). Maureen Lipman opens with the Broadway hit **Lost in Yonkers** at the Strand later this month.

**Annie Get Your Gun**, which has received excellent reviews from around the country, opens at The Prince of Wales Theatre on November 25. Peter O'Toole is back in the West End, this time in **Our Song** which has just opened at the Apollo Theatre.

**Barnum** appears to be heading for a successful short season at The Dominion, opening in December starring Paul Nicholas. Sadly, two shows have to close after only a short run. **Shades** with Patricia Hodges and **Philadelphia Here I Come** have both bitten the boards.



### Showing Now

Adelphi	Me And My Girl	Musical
Ambassadors	From a Jack To a King	Musical
Apollo	Our Song	Play
Apollo Victoria	Starlight Express	Musical
Cambridge	Return to the Forbidden Planet	Musical
Comedy	Six Degrees of Separation	Play
Criterion	Making it Better	Play
Drury Lane	Miss Saigon	Musical
Duchess	Don't Dress for Dinner	Comedy
Duke of York	Death and the Maiden	Play
Fortune	The Woman in Black	Play
Garrick	Dancing at Lughnasa	Play
Greenwich	Who Shall I Be Tomorrow?	Play
Haymarket	A Woman of No Importance	Play
Her Majesty's	The Phantom of the Opera	Musical
Lyric	Five Guys Named Mo	Musical
New London	Cats	Musical
Old Vic	Carmen Jones	Musical
Palace	Les Miserables	Musical
Palladium	Joseph and...	Musical
Phoenix	Blood Brothers	Musical
Piccadilly	Which Witch	Musical
Playhouse	It Runs in the Family	Comedy
Queens	Radio Times	Musical
St Martins	The Mousetrap	Play
Shaftesbury	Kiss of the Spider Woman	Musical
Vaudeville	Someone Who'll Watch Over Me	Play
Victoria Palace	Buddy	Musical
Whitehall	Murder By Misadventure	Thriller



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1988 'E' Reg

VOLVO B10M  
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Air/leaf, 57 seats,  
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VOLVO B10M

Van Hool,  
52 seater,  
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But one of the often overlooked reasons for selecting purpose-built video and having it fitted professionally is safety. Almost all coach fires are caused by electrical faults, often in areas where wiring has been modified badly. But that's not all. TV screens implode on impact, blasting glass fragments in all directions. The potential hazard this presents hardly bears thinking about. The better video monitors have two tiers of safety protection – shatterproof screens and a Perspex pane.

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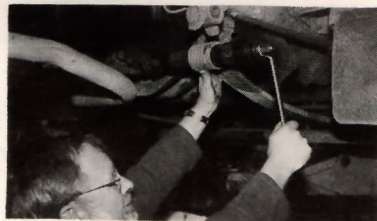
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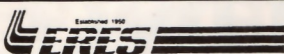
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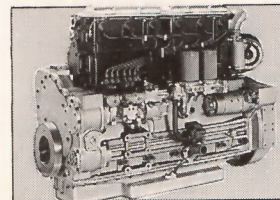
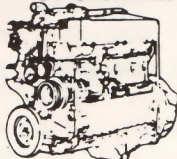
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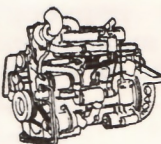
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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# APPOINTMENTS AND TENDERS

## ON BUS REVENUE PROTECTION INSPECTOR (Part Time)

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Previous experience in this field is essential.

For further details contact

**Mr Bernard Waters, HARRIS bus,  
Manor Road, West Thurrock,  
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**Tel: 0708 862720**

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## London Transport bus services

### Invitation to tender

London Transport invites tenders for the operation of the following Bus Routes.

They will continue to be marketed as an integral part of the London Transport network.

**208 ORPINGTON – LEWISHAM**

**399 HADLEY WOOD – BARNET GENERAL HOSPITAL**

The closing date for tenders is Monday 11th January 1993, and the services will commence in April 1993 (Route 399) and August 1993 (Route 208).

If you are interested please talk to Nick Newton on 071-918 3468 for details and application forms.

Or write to him at:

Tendered Bus Division, London Transport, Broadway Buildings, 55 Broadway, London SW1H 0BD



London Transport

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**A Tallant, Esq. Operations Director,  
Ribble Buses, Frenchwood Avenue,  
PRESTON PR1 4LU**

(33502/APP)





## New PRO for Transit Group

**H**ARRY Blundred's Transit Holdings Group has a new public relations officer. Andrea Nelson (above) will be based in Devon and handle PR for Transit's operations in Exeter (Devon General), Torbay (Bayline), Oxford (Thames Transit) and Portsmouth (Red and Blue Admiral).

Miss Nelson joins the bus company from west country publishing house David & Charles, where she spent two years as press and promotions officer.

## Fisher fighting for the west

**P**LYMOUTH Citybus managing director, Brian Fisher, is the new chairman of the south western section of the Chartered Institute of Transport.

Mr Fisher wants the CIT in the south west to make its voice heard on issues which he believes could spell the difference between life and death for the region.

"Whatever aspect of transport you consider, the south west has either been dealt a rotten deal already or is about to be," he said.

His concerns cover rail, air, sea, and road transport modes. On buses he is concerned that following the national pattern since deregulation there will be continued degradation. In rural areas in particular, operators are not making enough profit to re-invest in new vehicles which is storing up problems for the future. The lack of profit, ageing fleets and lack of subsidy is leading to poorer and poorer services in rural areas.

Mr Fisher wants the 300 CIT



Brian Fisher

members in Devon and Cornwall to use their power and influence to keep alive the issues which affect the south west.



## Ron's quality appointment

**S**JONES Truck Centre of Aldridge has appointed Ron Gartside (above) as aftermarket project manager.

His responsibilities will include overseeing the implementation of systems in the run-up to achieving BS5750. He will also develop the company's Red Triangle Roadside Assistance and Recovery Service.

S Jones Truck Centre has body and paintshop/livery facilities, undertakes driver training and runs a heavy breakdown/recovery service.



## Sales team boost at EuroDisney

**T**HE EuroDisney resort has boosted its UK sales team with the appointment of two new sales managers for the coach market.

Mark Webb (left) returns to the UK from the EuroDisney resort itself, where he was special activities representative for the last year. Prior to that he spent three years with Ingams.

He will be responsible for de-

veloping coaching business in the south of England.

Marco Mori (right) will be responsible for the north of the country. His career in the travel industry includes three years with Cosmos, latterly as product manager, and more recently four years with Quo Vadis as sales and marketing manager.

Both men will report to UK national sales manager, Peter Welch.



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| Coach operator <input type="checkbox"/>  | i) Single deck buses.....  | iv) Midi buses..... |
| Other (please specify).....              | ii) Double deck buses..... | v) Mini buses.....  |
|  | iii) Coaches.....          |                     |

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
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